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A CENTURY'S PROGRESS

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IN RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT

BY

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1.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

On a general recollection or review of the state of society or human nature, in the eighteenth century, the ideas that recur the oftenest, and remain uppermost on the mind, are the three following: the intercourses of men were more extensive than at any former period with which we are acquainted; the progression of knowledge was more rapid; and the discoveries of philosophy were applied more than they ever had been before to practical purposes.

The present age, in respect of former times, may be called the age of humanity.

Is there no new thing under the sun? I have extracted these sentences from the *Annual Register* for the year 1800. They might have been written in the year 1900 with reference to the century just closing. The coincidence is almost startling, and it stands as a warning against too hasty a readiness to attribute unique characteristics to the one century with which we happen to have had any personal acquaintance. Thanks to Mr. Leslie Stephen and other writers who have helped us to see what the eighteenth century really was, we have learnt to abandon the contemptuous tone of treating it commonly adopted a little while ago. It was a great century. In literature its dawn saw the finest

English prose that has ever been written; its sunset was resplendent with a burst of poetry that has not been equalled since. Swift's vigour and Addison's grace belong to the early decades of the century; before it had closed the choicest poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge had appeared. In religion this century had Bishop Butler to besiege its intellect, William Law to awaken its conscience, John Wesley and George Whitefield to introduce it to a living Gospel, Fletcher of Madeley to show it a fine type of saintliness. As a fruit of the spiritual quickening that marked its later decades, just about the close of the century most of the great missionary societies were founded. The very idea of a society—a body of Christian people united for a common object irrespective of church differences—indicated breadth of view and largeness of heart. These societies were all philanthropic, aiming at the highest good of mankind, and that with the widest views—widest geographically and socially, if not always intellectually. The optimism that was seen in the pioneers of the French Revolution appeared in England, though in a very different form and under very different circumstances. Turning to our *Annual Register* again, we read:

> About the year 1800 . . some of the same philosophers who set up for political reformers, particularly those con-

nected with a seminary of Dissenters at Hackney, believed not only that the period was approaching when men were to be governed by the purity of their own minds, and the moderation of their own desires, without any external coercion, but when the life of man might be prolonged *ad infinitum*, and philosophers, if they chose it, become immortal.*

This is in startling contrast to the pessimism that pervades so much of our popular literature for which a title has to be borrowed from Paris when it is called "*fin-de-siècle*." Is it because we are wiser that we are sadder men than our ancestors of a hundred years ago? The eighteenth was, indeed, a a great century; nevertheless, it was greatest in this, that it was the parent of one still greater. Of course, our division of the centuries is purely artificial. We cannot docket and pigeon-hole them in isolation, cannot treat them as detached blocks of time, for time is continuous, and every period is both the effect of its past and the cause of its future. No small part of the possessions of the nineteenth century is the harvest it has reaped from seeds sown in the age immediately preceding it. The best of these was the seed of progress. The buoyant enthusiasm of high-minded men and women in England a hundred years ago broke the apathy of indifference into which indolent human nature is always too ready to sink; it blew the magic horn that roused

* Vol. xlii., page 236.

the slumbering inmates of the enchanted palace of life.

Many writers have undertaken to describe this career of progress in its multifarious phases. I propose to sketch one, and only one, of these movements—the course of religious development. I leave out of account the immense strides of physical science and mechanical inventions—such as are witnessed by the railway and the telegraph and not less by the ironclad and the 100-ton gun, the spread of popular education and the triumphs of the Press, the political and municipal enfranchisement of the people, the enormous growth of the national wealth and the more comfortable living now enjoyed by most people, the expansion of "Greater Britain," and the vast extension of our Empire. Passing all these subjects by, not as uninteresting in themselves, though I am bound to say far too much significance is commonly attached to the more material of them, but as lying outside the range of my present purpose, I turn to a subject which I venture to think much more important than the maximum thickness of armour-plating carried by our ships or the "record" speed attained by our trains. In making this attempt I shall direct attention chiefly to the expansion and advance of ideas, not, however, because I hold that religion is solely or even chiefly an affair

of the intellect—to take such a view and thus mistake theology for religion is what Bacon would call one of the "idols of the school"—but I follow this line because all history testifies that in the long run the world is ruled by ideas. While tracing the course of ideas from their genesis to their practical issues we come on the solution of many a strange enigma in the world of life and fact.

Now, when we begin to inquire wherein the progress of the century in the ideas of religion consists, we seem to find ourselves as at one of those points in the middle of a forest from which a number of tracks open up in all directions. But the road which first invites us, because it leads to crossways into the other paths, is one that may be described by the general name *enlargement;* and this branches out in two directions, which repeatedly meet and run one into the other—enlargement of liberty and enlargement of knowledge. The enlargement of liberty marks the spirit of the thought of the century and the method of its thinking; the enlargement of knowledge the garnered harvest of its free inquiries.

I. In considering the first form of enlargement, the enlargement of liberty, we must be careful to distinguish between freedom of thought and what its self-appointed champions were pleased to denominate "free-thought." The so-called "free-

thought" of a former generation refused to believe in anything but what people could see with their own eyes or prove with their own reason. That self-denying ordinance is never imposed on the study of science; there the vastness of the field is universally recognised, with the consequence that the most conscientious learner must rely at every turn on the data afforded him by specialists. But real freedom of thought is emancipation from the tyranny of dogma which rests on custom or officialism. It was the weakness of the Evangelicalism in which the most fervent and fruitful religious experience of the earlier part of the century was moulded that it dreaded the plunge into inquiry as a man who cannot swim dreads falling into water. With regard to the ocean of thought those worthy men, the "Evangelicals," were "timorous mortals" who "lingered shivering on the brink," the very opposite to a Spinoza sounding "his dim and perilous way" on unknown seas of thought. The tendency of this intellectual timidity was to set safety before truth, to lay stress on the question, "Is this safe?" rather than on what should be the prior question with all honest minds, "Is it true?" Coleridge pointed out the peril of the pursuit of safety when he said, "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth will proceed by loving

his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all." But the emancipating process that has been in progress during the century has slowly reversed the order of procedure and taught us to ask in the first place for truth, truth at any cost, come what may. Mr. Stopford Brooke has remarked that Robertson of Brighton represented "the transitionary period." Now, it is just at such a period that courage is most needed, not simply to assert the rights of liberty, but to maintain the duty of truth-speaking; and no man manifested that courage more chivalrously, no man was more ready to face martyrdom for it than Robertson. In his day—the transition period which falls just in the middle of the century—it was still usual to meet objectionable teaching by a warning of its consequences, rather than by a refutation of its supposed errors. An incident in Robertson's life will serve to illustrate this position:

A lady, with whom he was slightly acquainted, assailed him for "heterodox opinions," and menaced him with the consequences which, in this world and the next, would follow on the course of action he was pursuing. His only answer was, "I don't care." "Do you know what 'don't care' came to, sir?" "Yes, madam," was the grave reply, "He was crucified on Calvary."*

In England, during the early part of the century,

* *Life and Letters.* Library Edition. Page 353.

people who showed any interest in religion were sharply separated into two camps. On the one hand stood the so-called "sceptics," who were treated as malignant infidels and blasphemous scoffers for daring to question accepted tenets; on the other hand, there were the orthodox believers, who took the received opinions for granted, regarding any doubts concerning them as temptations of the devil, and any departures from them as signs of a lapse from grace. These ideas were treasured as relics in the sanctuary, though some of them had become little better than dry bones fit for the crypt. But in course of time they were deprived of their sacred seclusion, dragged out to the light of common day, ranged side by side with the conclusions of science and history, and compelled to submit to the ruthless tests of searching criticism. When theology was torn from her quiet cell and plumped down in the noisy market-place, many people were shocked at the sacrilege, and in truth the market-place is not exactly her natural habitat; but, at all events, it offers fresh air and full sunlight, neither of which indispensables for health abound in conventual seclusion.

II. Then, side by side with a more fearless treatment of questions touching religion, resulting from the new-won liberty, there has come an enlargement

of knowledge. The horizon has been widened with the inevitable consequence that more objects have come into view. One form of this enlargement is simply geographical, and yet it means much. British theology has ceased to be insular, and has become cosmopolitan. America, France, Holland, above all Germany, have contributed the results of research and thought to the common stock of educated opinion. Pusey was suspected of heterodoxy in his early days solely because he was known to be studying German theology. On the other hand, Dean Stanley once said to Mark Pattison, "How different the fortunes of the Church of England might have been if Newman had been able to read German." *

In a letter dated 1849 Robertson writes :

> The insinuation of "German neology" is a comprehensive and very convenient charge by which all earnest thought is tabooed at the present day. It is quite enough to hint that it is German. So at the time of the Reformation they spoke of Greek and Hebrew. "Greek," said a Roman Catholic priest, "is a new language, just discovered, and full of heresies. As for the Hebrew language, all who study that become Jews immediately." So they speak of German now. Englishmen seem to think that the Redeemer died exclusively for them, and that light shines nowhere but here. Sixty million of God's creatures speak German, and can only get their theology in that! Alas! for those who have not the English theology, though it be, unfortunately, only a feeble echo of that which in its freshness came from Germany 300 years ago.†

* Mark Pattison, *Memoirs*, page 210.

† *Life and Letters*, page 145.

Let us be just. There was very much going on in the class-rooms of German universities at that time which was calculated to startle people who came upon it suddenly and unprepared, and some wild speculation that has since been abandoned. Nevertheless, when all allowance has been made for these considerations, and while it is evident that a great deal of the produce of German scholarship and criticism will continue to be rejected by sober thinkers, we should be wanting in gratitude if we did not admit that English students during the latter half of the century owe an incalculable debt to the amazing industry of German research and the singular acumen of German criticism. In the present day it would be simply ridiculous to treat our English theology as a national preserve. Protection has broken down here as it has broken down in commerce, and here, too, the consequence has been no little gain to Great Britain.

The habit of specialising that has been adopted by necessity in all other branches of science, owing to the vastness of the field to be covered, has greatly added to the common stock of knowledge in theological subjects. When we think of the discoveries of Layard, George Smith, and later explorers among the remains of Nineveh and Babylon, the information gathered by the Palestine Exploration Fund,

the work of Tischendorf and the textual specialists in bringing to light and collating valuable manuscripts, and a host of other contributions to our fund of knowledge, we must recognise great enlargement in these directions. And yet the most noticeable enlargement is to be seen, not so much in the data themselves, as in the scientific spirit of dealing with them. In the Middle Ages theology was "the Queen of the Sciences"; but at the beginning of the present century theology and science eyed one another with mutual suspicion. Now again theology claims to be a science, but to be studied in accordance with the admitted principles of modern scientific investigations. An instance of this change may be seen in the history of the London University. When that institution was founded theology was excluded from its curriculum—a necessity at the time, because then theology meant dogmatics. But under the new charter there is a faculty of theology, because it is now understood that the subject can be treated scientifically, apart from ecclesiastical prepossessions.

I am not prepared to say that the enlargement that characterises the history of religious thought during our century is wholly a gain. It has been the occasion of much perplexity of mind, much restlessness and unsettlement. The decay of dogma,

like other forms of decomposition, is not pleasant to contemplate, nor is its atmosphere altogether wholesome. A loosening of texture, a breaking up of tissue, a general disintegration are among the immediate results of the enlargement of liberty and knowledge, and such negative results do not in themselves look at all like signs of progress.

But there is another side to the process. If dogmatic theology has been decaying, historical theology has been developing. Never has the Bible been studied so thoroughly or comprehended in its various relations so justly as in the present day. Above all, the later part of the century has been distinguished by what is called "the return to Christ." Never before have the facts of the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ been subject to such searching examination, or brought so clearly to light, or applied so directly to present-day affairs. This is an indication that we are already passing from the destructive to the constructive stage of theological thought. Moreover, it may be observed that, while at the middle of the century people who considered themselves advanced thinkers repudiated the word "Evangelical" as a title indicative of narrowness, obscurantism, and bigotry, this is now much less the case, and men who cheerfully accept

the ripest results of criticism and are willing to adjust their minds to all ascertained truth, at the same time rejoice in the name "Evangelical," and, what is of far more moment, prove themselves heartily loyal to Jesus Christ and His gospel of redemption.

II.

LEADING MINDS OF THE CENTURY.

LEADING MINDS OF THE CENTURY.

When we attempt to trace the thought of the nineteenth century back to its strongest and most influential leader we are brought to the greatest thinker of the previous age, the greatest of modern philosophers, Immanuel Kant. Starting from Hume's universal scepticism in his analytical processes, Kant works out a new synthesis on moral and practical lines. His critique of the Pure Reason seemed to sweep the universe of all transcendental truths, or rather to demonstrate their inaccessibility to the human mind. Thus he analyses and apparently dissolves the famous "argument from design," the sheet-anchor of eighteenth century apologetics. But then what is lost to the "Pure Reason" is recovered by the "Practical Reason," which gives us the three great factors of religion—God, Free-will, and Immortality. Kant's influence is felt in regions where his philosophy is not consciously accepted. It is reflected in one of the chief contrasts between the theology of the eighteenth-century and that of the nineteenth. The hard objectivism of the earlier

period, in which religion was handled as a matter to be demonstrated by evidence that would satisfy a British jury—essentially rationalistic, for Paley, its most famous representative, was in method and spirit as much a rationalist as Voltaire—has given place to ways of regarding religion through personal experience, in the light of the subjective consciousness. Schleiermacher is the founder and greatest leader of this new method. He it is who struck the key-note of nineteenth-century theology. With Schleiermacher knowledge of truths in religion is based on the consciousness—those of general religion on the consciousness of God, and those of specific Christianity on the consciousness that is involved in faith in Christ. Pfleiderer maintains that Schleiermacher's system is much more akin to Herder's ideas than to those of Kant, for, like Herder, Schleiermacher makes religion primarily a matter of the heart, and interprets its ideas as the consequences of reflection on the emotions. Schleiermacher found room for direct intuitions in his earlier writing, though subsequently these were subordinated to feeling, religion being in its essence the sense of dependence, an emotion rather than a conviction. The one-sidedness of this view, its lack of perception of the obligation of duty, has often been pointed out. Nevertheless, there was an intellectual element

in Schleiermacher's teaching not always allowed by his disciples, since he found doctrine reflected in the mirror of experience. It is true that this was itself very subjective. Thus, our ideas of the Trinity and of the Divine attributes perceived in Christian consciousness are interpreted rather as phases of that experience than as representing essential facts of the Divine existence. This is carrying over to the realm of religion the belief that knowledge is only of *phænomena* adding, however, spiritual *phænomena* to sense perceptions for the materials of knowledge. Such a line of thought pursued later in Great Britain by Sir William Hamilton and Dean Mansel became the innocent Christian parent of the greatest modern enemy of Christianity, agnosticism. While we must recognise it as an important factor in the thinking of the century, of itself it can scarcely be reckoned an element of progress. When, however, we turn to the positive part of Schleiermacher's teaching, we discover how there was that in him which gave theology a lift out of the ruts of the eighteenth century. Schleiermacher showed that we can only know truth in proportion as we assimilate it, and he made theology a reality of the life by linking it to experience, whereas previously it had been commonly regarded by theologians as an objective science, like astronomy or chemistry.

Coleridge, adopting Kant's forms of thought and imbibing Schleiermacher's spirit, introduced the fruits of these teachings to England, which he found dominated by Locke in metaphysics, and Paley in theology. In his *Aids to Reflection* he insists to iteration on the difference between "Understanding," which deals with particular perceptions, and "Reason," which grasps the higher principles. With Coleridge, this "reason" corresponds in a measure to Kant's "practical reason." He, like Schleiermacher, falls back on experience for the test of truth. We must not associate Coleridge with the pietistic temperament which discards the aids of scholarship in the pursuit of the highest truth; he is as far from that as he is from the arid rationalism that treats all religion as a *hortus siccus* of dead ideas, to be examined in the cold light of pure science. "Tell me," he writes, "ye high-flown perfectionists, ye boasters of the light within you, could the highest perfection of your inward light ever show to you the history of past ages, the state of the world at present, the knowledge of arts and tongues, without books or teachers? How, then, can you understand the Providence of God, or the age, the purpose, the fulfilment of prophecies? &c."* The most fascinating of Coleridge's works on religion is his little

* *Aids to Reflection* (Author's Edition, page 145).

posthumous book, *Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit*, in which he makes the statement that he believes in the Bible for the reason that it "finds" him, and bases faith on personal experience.

The line of thought that had been marked out by the disjointed reflections of Coleridge was continued by Frederick Denison Maurice. If in these later days we have come to admire Maurice for his intellectual honesty and the righteous indignation with which he protested against what he held to be unworthy conceptions of religion, rather than for his own contributions to the thought and life of the century, it is, in part, because we have absorbed so much of his teaching, that in course of time we have come to take for granted and regard almost as commonplace what was strange and uncongenial to the religious public, till he had pressed it on the attention of thinking people. A staunch adherent of the formulas of the Church of England, he laboured to show that his specific notions were contained in those formulas, with the result that he was accused of casuistical reasoning—unfairly so, because no man was more honest or believed more profoundly in what he followed; but he was misunderstood on account of the subtlety of his arguments and what many felt to be the indefiniteness of his language. Maurice was a strong thinker on the

lines of his special mission, which was to vindicate the righteousness of God against artificial conventions of theology, and exalt the moral and spiritual contents of the Gospel against the notion that it was a mere device for eluding Divine justice, little better than an insurance ticket against the chances of everlasting perdition. It is to Maurice more than to any other teacher that we owe the change from the popular conception of Christianity as chiefly a contrivance for escaping the penalties of sin, to the higher, more spiritual conception of a redemption of life and character, personal and social.

Arnold of Rugby was another leader in the moral protest against a belittled conception of redemption, with which was joined courage to look truth in the face. Through Bunsen he came into contact with German Biblical and historical criticism. Emancipating himself from traditional theology, he appeared to the High Church party as the most dangerous foe of the faith, and he in turn, as well as Maurice, became leading opponents of the rising Oxford movement. But it was in his positive teaching that Arnold most affected the life and thought of religion. In dealing with public questions he reminds us of one of the Hebrew prophets, so earnestly does he preach righteousness in national affairs. He approaches the subject

of faith from the same lofty moral ground. "Thus," he writes, "I call it unbelief when a man deliberately renounces his obedience to God, and his sense of responsibility to Him, and this never can be without something of an evil heart rebelling against a yoke which it does not like to bear."* Arnold and Maurice have been called leaders of the Broad Church party, but they both repudiated the name; they were both opposed to all party spirit in religion. Arnold argued for the widest possible comprehension, his theory of the Church being that it was the nation in its religious life, so that he would have included all the sects in the ample bounds of the one communion, allowing them their varieties of worship and belief. A similar spirit of comprehension was seen in Dean Stanley, who delighted to gather at his table men of great diversity of views, and sought a bond of reconciliation in the spirit of Christian love Stanley, like Arnold, accepted the spirit of historical criticism. His picturesque pages are alive with historical parallels that are more than illustrative, for they reveal a new method in the treatment of religion, the treatment of it as a great fact in the life of mankind to be looked at not in isolation, but in vital relation with all other facts.

* *Life and Correspondence.* 9th Edition. Vol. I., page 259.

Among Nonconformists a similar line was followed by Baldwin Brown.

Meanwhile, Thomas Carlyle was at work in quite another region. While Coleridge introduced German philosophy into England, and Baron Bunsen German criticism, Carlyle brought the power and beauty of German literature under the notice of the British people, who had been previously entirely ignorant of its great writers. Richter, Novalis, but above all, Goethe, for whom Carlyle expressed boundless admiration, were interpreted to our countrymen by his vigorous, lifelike portraiture. But Carlyle had his own message to his times; a frank recognition of greatness of gift and character, apart from creed and sect—a supreme contempt for formulas, and a fierce hatred of all shams, as in his vehement recommendation of Dr. Johnson's precept, first of all to clear the mind of cant—a dogged determination to get below the surface of things to the reality, and not to mistake the clothes for the man, shown in *Sartor Resartus*, an early work, but one that sets forth the fundamental principles of Carlyle's message—these are some of the contributions which Carlyle has given to the life of the churches in England, though he himself was no lover of them.

Meanwhile, thought had been moving in Ger-

many. Hegel superseded Kant, and with his philosophy of the identity of subject and object, of thought and being, opposed the agnostic tendency that was the consequence of following the first and speculative part of the Kantian system. The absolute thought realises itself in existence. If, then, the philosopher can follow that thought he will come face to face with reality, and attain truth of the universe of being, and not merely relative, subjective truth. Professor Green, of Oxford, represented a modified Hegelianism in England, and Dr. John Caird applied it with fuller appreciation of specific Christianity to the theory of religion. The abstract difficulties of the system, and its paradoxical affirmation of contradictions as both true in the higher syntheses, repelled the common-sense Englishman. Besides, since it melts the positive revelation of Scripture and the distinctive facts of the Gospel into a universal evolution of religion, Hegelian philosophy has not been widely recognised in England as the key to the mysteries of theology; and yet, indirectly, its method has affected thought in regions where the name of Hegel is scarcely known.

Then a new current of thought flowed in from quite another direction. Strauss had applied Hegelianism to the Gospel history, and Baur had treated the

apostolic history as a product of tendencies in the minds of the early Christians, when Ritschl rose up in revolt. The later history of theology is largely the history of Ritschlianism, its influences, and the opposition it has aroused. Ritschl appeared with a positive religion, which seemed to promise satisfaction to men who had been wearied by the barren negations of destructive criticism, and yet who were quite unable to return to the discarded formulæ of the older systematic theology. In his teaching religion is kept apart from metaphysics. Christianity is not to be taken as a philosophy of the universe. It must be looked at in its historical facts. Its foundation is to be found in the Gospel records. There we see the history of redemption in the Person and life and death of Jesus Christ. All that we call Christian theology is to be taken as the result of the impression of the Christ of the Gospels upon the minds of men. But this is not to be regarded in isolated individualism, as was the case with Schleiermacher's appeal to the inner consciousness. Ritschl differs here from Schleiermacher on two important points. The experience he appeals to is of an objective nature, since it is found in the contemplation of the historic Jesus; and this is realised in the kingdom of heaven, that is to say, in social and corporate relations. The

denial of the metaphysical elements of Christianity is usually seized upon for attack by opponents of Ritschlianism ; but it is right to take account of the great positive contribution he has made to the religious life of our age. Ritschl is the most influential of all our leaders in that great movement of the later part of the century which is called the return to Christ. It is he especially who has turned the attention of Protestant Christendom away from systems of theology to the personal Redeemer. Within the New Testament he has changed the centre of gravity from the epistles to the gospels, and made it felt that the supreme authority in Christian truth is not St. Paul, but Christ. This must be read in the light both of the initiation of the kingdom of heaven and also of redemption—two facts which with Ritschl are essentially one and the same. We have to be thankful, too, that this teacher takes us away from the creeds and theological definitions through which alone any one was formerly permitted to contemplate Jesus Christ, and leads us to see Him as He was on earth, as His portrait is preserved in the gospels. The serious drawback lies in the fact that we have to use the past tense here, and say "as He *was*." The idea of "The living Christ" as a personal presence in our midst, which with many among us is central to all religion and most

characteristic of what is best of our age, is not clear in Ritschl, although Mr. Garvie contends for its presence in his masterly exposition of the system. Later Ritschlians have not persevered in the rigour of historical empiricism that Ritschl himself maintained. Harnack would reconcile Ritschl with the teachings of Luther, and in England we find in some quarters a Ritschlian tendency to rest faith on the Christ of the gospels interpreted by the personal experience of redemption in association with the Kingdom of Heaven, to which is united a belief in the real presence of the living Christ, and the personal influence of the Holy Spirit.

Among English theologians of the later, but not the latest, period, a significant position must be assigned to R. W. Dale, of Birmingham. Returning to scholastic methods in his great work on the Atonement, and adopting a mystical if not a Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper, Dale nevertheless shewed in his *Living Christ and the Four Gospels* that, though in common with English scholars generally he attached greater importance to the testimony of history than was usually allowed on the Continent, he also highly valued the more direct testimony of the character of Christ, His historic influence on the world, and the spiritual power of His presence in our own day. An intensely

practical application of religion to the details of the every-day world and the actual facts of life among men and women comes out in his expository writings on Ephesians and St. James's Epistle. This is significant of the emancipation of religion from the tutelage of the schools, and its appearance in the market-place with a claim to regulate the affairs of common life.

A host of other names crowd upon us while we are reflecting on the leading minds that have influenced the age in its conceptions of eternal things. Keble, Newman, Pusey, are most prominent as leaders of the Oxford Movement; Darwin and Spencer will come up in connection with the relation of science to religion, and especially in connection with evolution, the most brilliant and influential specific idea of the century; Robertson Smith and the great Biblical critics in association with their special work; Erskine of Linlathen, Macleod Campbell, and others, in relation to changed views on Redemption and the escape from the rigour of Calvinism—a marked feature of the century; Maurice, again, and Edward White, with reference to the problem of Future Punishment; the great preachers for their popular contributions to the progress of the century; the poets for their light and leading in the region of imagination.

III.

THE OXFORD MOVEMENT.

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Before proceeding to a consideration of the details of the progress of the century, we are arrested by a movement that seems to run counter to the very idea of progress and to indicate a serious retrocession towards mediævalism. The progress, as we have seen, is to be traced in the direction of liberalism; but it was for the express purpose of checking and counteracting liberalism that this movement was started. Moreover its latest fruits, seen in an extensive Romanising of the Church of England, appear to be quite opposite in character to what we can hail as signs of advance. When, however, we look into the history of this most remarkable attempt to push back the hands of the clock of time the question arises: Is it all a flat contradiction to our cherished notions of progress, or at least so much make-weight against the onward march? or can we trace in it indications that even here the more hopeful spirit of the age has not been entirely eluded?

The Oxford Movement originated in a protest

against liberalism. It was felt by a group of eager souls, more awake to the signs of the times than their official superiors, that there were agitations in the political world, and currents of thought in the religious, ominous of a gathering storm that threatened disaster to the Church as they conceived her to be constituted. This was just the time of the national excitement about the Reform Bill. Strong men were saying strong things on the awkward question of privilege, and the privileged Church came in for her share of a rough attack that sounded like a menace of revolution. At the same time in regions of theology there was going on a certain development of liberal thought which occasioned alarm of another kind. Oriel College is identified with the rise of the Oxford Movement. But there was an earlier Oriel School against which this movement was a distinct protest. Whateley was a fellow of Oriel; and in the first quarter of the century this clear thinker, and the inspiring Coplestone, head of the college,—from whom Whateley said he derived the main principles of his life—together with the keen, vivacious, kindly Dr. Hawkins, Coplestone's successor, were the leaders of what was called the "Noetic School." Hampden, famous in a later controversy, Blanco White, who went off into extremes not approved of by his companion thinkers,

and in a measure Chevalier Bunsen, were in the same line of thought. The best known and the most influential of these men was Whateley, afterwards Archbishop of Dublin. Whateley aimed, as Dr. Tulloch has said, "to make men think more simply and sincerely about religion." His own mind was honest and lucid, but honesty and lucidity form an alarming combination in the eyes of people wedded to ancient traditions, who dread of all things most to look truth straight in the face. Dr. Arnold was a friend of Whateley, and the boldness of Arnold's treatment of two subjects, the human element of the Bible, and the relation of Church and State—identifying the Church with the Christian State, and so aiming at the comprehension of Dissenters—excited a perfect terror and seemed to demand a powerful rally on the part of men to whom such ideas were abhorrent. It was as a protest against this twofold liberalism that the Oxford Movement arose.

It is a true instinct that has given to the institution which aims at perpetuating the Oxford Movement the name "Keble College." Thomas Keble was the actual founder of the movement and the inspiring genius of its earlier years. Few would have thought that the gentle, devout, retiring, self-depreciating author of *The Christian Year* would have inaugurated a course of action which has

shaken the Church of England to its foundation. But Keble was a man to win at once confidence and reverence. Playful as a boy with his intimates, and repudiating all notions of superiority, although having won a "double first" he held the foremost place of his year in scholarship, he gathered friends in a right human way. At the same time all who could appreciate him felt that in approaching this modest man they were coming into contact with a saint, and learnt to hold him in high reverence. Of a very different temperament was Keble's pupil and disciple, Richard Hurrell Froude, the knight-errant of the movement: daring, outspoken, chivalrous, it was he who ventured to put into words the thoughts that were stirring in quieter minds, and set the movement going in the world of action. His brief, brilliant course only gave promise of what he might have been and done. Greater than either of these in mental power and public influence, the dominant spirit of the cause when once he had thrown his energies into it, was John Henry Newman, whose tragic career is one of the problems of the century. "If I was ever asked," says Froude, "what good deed I had ever done, I should say that I had brought Keble and Newman to understand each other." Keble was a son of the rectory, who had been brought up in the atmosphere of old-fashioned

High Church notions, and it was with a sincere desire to give effect to these ideas that he took part in the new movement. Newman's position was very different. He shows us in his *Apologia pro vitâ suâ* —one of the most fascinating autobiographies ever written, that comes hot from the fire of passionate experience—how he was educated in Calvinistic Evangelicalism, and how he worked his way, step by step, first to the High Anglican position, and later to the final goal of such a course when it is thorough and consistent, Roman Catholicism. His mind, it has been pointed out, was essentially sceptical. It was only in Rome that he could find a lasting refuge from mental unrest. No two temperaments and no two experiences could be more unlike than those of the gentle, conservative Keble, and Newman with his piercing intellect, his endless subtlety of thought, his long unrest of soul. Somewhat later the movement secured the adhesion of Dr. Pusey, a man of more prominent position in University and Church circles, whose presence gave it a certain position and respectability in the eyes of the world. Pusey was by far the most learned man of the company, and he deemed the *Library of the Fathers*, a translation of the ante-Nicene and Nicene Fathers which he edited, as his special contribution to the requirements of the age. He was long consulted as the highest

authority in the movement, which was popularly named "Puseyite" in recognition of his pre-eminence. But he was not easily approachable, and his ponderous learning and dry style did not aid him to become a popular leader.

"On July 14, 1833," says Cardinal Newman in his *Apologia*, "Mr. Keble preached the assize sermon in the University pulpit. It was published under the title of 'National Apostasy.' I have ever considered and kept the day as the start of the religious movement of 1833." The triumphs of the Reform Bill, followed by the suppression of ten Irish Bishoprics, suggested to Keble that England was turning against her Church and her God; and his famous sermon was a protest against what he conceived to be nothing less than a course of apostasy on the part of the nation, together with a vindication of the claims of what he called "The Apostolic Church." Thus Keble struck the keynote of the movement. The claims of God were identified with the claims of the Church; by the Church in England was understood the Established Church to the exclusion of all other Christian communions; this Church was taken to be of Apostolic authority. No doubt the ultimate aim of so devout and spiritually-minded a man as Mr. Keble was to preserve and restore a high tone of religion

in the land ; but the means he pursued, and accordingly the immediate end he aimed at, were to vindicate the rights of his Church. That is the immediate aim of the Oxford Movement throughout—the vindication and exaltation of the Church of England as the Church of God in the land; and therefore, in the form in which such action always takes with High Churchmen—a Cyprian among the Fathers, a Laud among the Anglican divines, a Keble in the newer age—a vindication and an exaltation of the rights of the clergy as Christ's supernaturally endowed instruments for sustaining the life of His Church.

In July of this same year, 1833, a private meeting was held in Hadleigh, at the parsonage of Mr. Hugh James Rose, a Churchman of conspicuous reputation among men sympathetic with Keble's views, to consult as to the best way of bringing them to bear upon the Church. Out of this Hadleigh meeting grew the *Tracts for the Times*, the notoriety of which led to its leaders being known as "Tractarians." The chosen method was ingeniously original. Hitherto the word "tract" was understood to describe a simple leaflet of an extreme Evangelical tone used for distribution by kindly ladies in their visits among the cottages of the poor. These new tracts were composed by University men, some of them recognised scholars, others writers of

the finest literary ability; and they were primarily intended for distribution among the clergy. While several writers contributed, Newman, with whom the idea had originated, himself contributed the greater number. The first tract—written by Newman—shows that its author was in live earnest, burning with his message. It is a straight, pointed, searching appeal to the clergy to consider their position, addressed by the writer "To my brethren in the sacred ministry, the presbyters and deacons of the Church of England, ordained thereunto by the Holy Ghost and the imposition of hands"; and it begins, "Fellow-Labourers,—I am but one of yourselves—a presbyter—and therefore I conceal my name, lest I should take too much on myself by speaking in my own person. Yet speak I must; for the times are very evil, and yet no one speaks against them." Newman proceeds to urge the clergy to ask themselves on what basis the Church stands. In times like these it is vain to rest in custom and temporal advantages. "Hitherto," he writes, "you have been upheld by your birth, your education, your wealth, your connections; should these secular advantages cease, on what must Christ's ministers depend? Is not this a serious practical question?" The tract proceeds to answer the question. "I fear," writes Newman, "we have neglected the real

ground on which our authority is built—OUR APOSTOLIC DESCENT." That is the pivot of the whole case —the doctrine of Apostolic Succession. But it is a curious fact that it was not this tract, or others that asserted the same doctrine, that first arrested attention and roused serious opposition. Newman was a born controversialist, always ready for the fray, a war-horse scenting the battle from afar. But it was the work of a quiet, retiring scholar, Isaac Williams, in Tract 80, that brought on the storm. Its title was *Reserve in Communicating Religious Knowledge*. This tract was understood by plain, common-sense Englishmen to inculcate Jesuitical sophistry. Defenders of the Tractarians have denied the imputation and set it down to stupidity, ignorance, prejudice, malice; and no doubt, as far as so sober a scholar as its author was concerned, no such extreme use of his words was intended. But the appalling revelations in Mr. Walsh's *Secret History of the Oxford Movement* show that there was only too much ground for alarm in view of the tendency the tract suggested. This is the first indication—quite innocent compared with what was to follow—of that unwholesome want of frank straightforwardness which has smirched the movement throughout, and which lies before us now as the most grave charge against its moral character.

The accession of Dr. Pusey gave a new turn to the Tractarian movement. A widely-read and cautious scholar, Pusey perceived that the tracts were too irresponsible, too little supported with argument and evidence, too thin in substance. From the time of his joining in the enterprise they took the form of solid, learned treatises. Pusey's own tract on *Baptism* was an elaborate theological work which roused opposition by its pronounced sacramentarianism. But the most notorious of these publications was Tract 90 by Newman, in which that amazingly subtle writer argued that the "Articles" of the Church of England might be interpreted so as to comprehend Roman Catholic doctrine. This led to a protest of four Oxford fellows, one of whom was Tait, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. The Tractarians were condemned; the authorities both of the University and of the Church were pronounced in their opposition; and no more tracts were written. Finally a disastrous blow was struck: in the year 1845 Newman was admitted within the pale of the Roman Catholic Church. And yet this was not the end of the movement. Keble and the other founders had been simple and retiring in their manners, and even austere in their conduct of Divine worship, abhorring all display. But at the next stage a

complete change appears, and the movement blossoms out into ritualism with all its æsthetic fascinations. Then it attracts popular attention, and grows into the monstrous proportions we have witnessed in our own day. But throughout, its principles are essentially the same, sacerdotal and sacramental, the magnification of the Church in the person of its clergy by means of the doctrine of Apostolical Succession, the keystone of the whole structure.

Lovers of spiritual freedom and of the light and progress this allows cannot but see in the Oxford movement a determined antagonism pledged to oppose the very ideas and actions they prize and honour. It was started, as we have seen, with the express purpose of resisting liberalism. Nevertheless, it is not simply to be set down as an obstruction to progress. If that were the case, so largely does it bulk in the history of the century, it would be hard to maintain that this century was, on the whole, one of progress at all. But there are two directions in which the movement shows signs of real progress. In the first place, none but the most bigoted foes can deny that it embodied, though, as some of us think, in an unfortunately perverse form, a genuine revival of religion. No honest student of the times can doubt that Keble and Froude and Newman, not

to name others associated with them, were men of deep personal piety, profoundly concerned at the deadness of religion in the Church, and eager to awaken a spirit of devotion. Nor can anybody, fairly examining the facts of the case, comparing the state of the Church before and after their efforts, deny that they succeeded to a wonderful degree. For consider what the Church was when the first tracts were issued—the cure of souls too often regarded as nothing better than a living; here a fox-hunting parson who cared more for his horses than for his parishioners; there a respectable ecclesiastical dignitary courting favour with the aristocratic families of the county, and always siding with them against the people; snug rectories and neglected churches; services held as rarely as possible, and then conducted in the most dreary way by mumbling parson and illiterate clerk, where "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed." It was a period of religious deadness; up and down the land people were deserting the parish churches, where, they declared, they were "starved," and seeking food in the Dissenting chapels. Stories survive to this day of many Nonconformist Churches that grew and flourished through their ministrations to the dissatisfied members of the Church of England, who found in them the religious life they failed to dis-

cover in their own communion. But what a change has taken place since those days, and that chiefly among the High Church clergy! There has been a great shaking of the dry bones, a mighty awakening of life and energy, a rich renewal of consecration and devotion, seen not only in the conduct of the services, but also in every branch of parish work. Considering all things, and taking a broad view of the history of the two movements, we may almost compare the Oxford revival of the nineteenth century with that earlier Oxford revival, the Methodist awakening of the eighteenth. Each of these movements found the Church spiritually dead; each stirred it into new life as with a veritable resurrection. Surely that is progress.

It is in the light of these facts that we should read two sentences in one of Newman's sermons, the first of which has been most unfairly judged, because it has been so often quoted without the qualifications that follows. I refer to the following:—

> I will not shrink from uttering my firm conviction that it would be a gain to this country were it vastly more superstitious, more bigoted, more gloomy, more fierce in its religion than at present it shows itself to be. Not, of course, that I think the tempers of mind herein implied desirable, which would be an evident absurdity, but I think them infinitely more desirable than a heathen obduracy, and a cold, self-sufficient, self-wise tranquillity.*

* *Parochial Sermons.* Vol. I., page 320.

Nevertheless, it will be justly said that such progress is at the cost of much that can only be regarded as retrogression, so that when the final effects are produced, when the full harvest is reaped, we may doubt whether we have not lost as much ground in one direction as we have gained in another. A revival of religion is a source of progress, but the revival of Romanism is not a progressive movement. To repudiate Protestantism, denounce the Reformation, imitate the Papal Church, and fawn upon Rome, is to go back, back to the middle ages in the Church, as surely as the return to crossbows and chain-armour would be to go back to the middle ages in the army. But this is not all. In spite of an amazing reversion in the intellectual part of the movement, even here we may see signs of progress. Such a volume as *Lux Mundi* is eloquently indicative of it. Here is a work contributed to by leaders of the Sacerdotal party, such as Canon Gore, in which the results of modern research in science and recent criticism in Biblical literature are freely admitted. While for the most part the Evangelical section of the Church of England has adhered to old-world positions with regard to these questions with pitiful timidity, High Churchmen have not feared to face them and frankly accept their results. Some of them seem to say: "So long as you leave us our

doctrine of Apostolic Succession with its accompaniments of priestly privileges and sacramental rites, you may freely carry on your discussions among any other matters of religious interest." Of course, this is an inconsistent position, but it is in its very inconsistency that our hope lies, for there we may discern a promise of ultimate emancipation. When once the solvent of criticism is admitted, you cannot determine how deeply it will penetrate. The method which High Churchmen already allow to be employed on the Bible must come in course of time to be applied to their own peculiar system. When it is so applied the whole fabric will crumble to powder. To admit the reasonings of Driver and Cheyne is to prepare for the reception of he conclusions of Lightfoot and Hort.

IV.

RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

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Nothing is more characteristic of this wonderful century of progress than the immense advance it has witnessed both in the principles and in the achievements of science. It might be called *par excellence* the century of science. We are all familiar with proud reminders of its enrichment of the conveniences of life, the material products of science in the form of inventions. When we recollect that only a hundred years ago there were no railways, no electric telegraphs, no gas lights in the streets, no anæsthetics for surgical operations, no lucifer matches; that our Navy consisted of wooden sailing ships, and that our land traffic was carried on by means of stage-coaches, waggons, and canal-barges, while a host of contrivances to save trouble and minimise suffering had not been then so much as thought of, we must admit that there is some excuse for the pæan with which the material progress of the last hundred years has been celebrated. And yet it must be admitted that the value of life

cannot be judged by the increase of its command over the forces of nature; and when we consider that this advance, which has ministered so largely to the arts of peace, has been utilised with equal skill and resource for improving the weapons of war, our huge ironclads and our quick-firing guns loom before our eyes as grim portents to warn us against too jaunty a temper of self-satisfaction. But it is in the intellectual triumphs of science that we may recognise its truest achievements. At the beginning of the century there were no real sciences of geology, biology or electricity; in chemistry, oxygen was not known, and the atomic theory had not made its appearance. It is not too much to affirm that during the last hundred years science has taken a longer stride than its progress during all the previous ages of the life of man on this planet. Not only has there been this growth of knowledge among the students of science; but the influence of their pursuits has been spread abroad, permeating all classes of society, so that people who are but little instructed in the truths and processes of science breathe its atmosphere and talk its dialect. This means a great transformation of tone and temper, as well as a more or less widely distributed acquisition of knowledge. The consequence is a second *renaissance*. What the "Revival of Letters"

did for the fifteenth century the awakening of science has done in parallel ways for the nineteenth.

Now, such a vast development of new ideas and new ways of thinking could not but have the most profound effect on the attitude of men's minds towards religion. Most of us have no conception what a complete revolution this has meant for theology. In the mutual relations of religion and science hitherto the action has been very one-sided. Religion has been profoundly affected by science, but as yet science has not shown much readiness to concede the claims of religion. That is not at all remarkable, seeing that for so many generations science was obsessed with a nightmare of religious superstition, when it was not actually persecuted by bigoted ignorance in priest's robes. On the whole, it has used a new, hard-won freedom with commendable self-restraint in its treatment of what it might have regarded as its old enemy; and there are recent indications that a reverent spirit is leading responsible men of science to make more allowance for the unseen than was the case a few years ago. In the seventies, when Tyndall and Huxley were ruling the intellectual world, a scornful materialism treated the claims of everything that did not come within the domain of physical science as obscurantist. This was the time when people talked of the brain secreting

thought as the liver secretes bile. At this period, in his famous Belfast address before the British Association, Professor Tyndall ascribed to matter "the promise and potency" of all existence. So haughty a temper was dominant that *The Spectator* gravely discussed the danger to liberty if such a man as Professor Huxley were to be in power, believing that he would inaugurate a new Inquisition as a persecuting engine directed against heretics who ventured to oppose the orthodox opinions of physicists. Dr. Martineau then proved himself more than a match for these giants of the science world, showing by masterly arguments that if it required mind to interpret the universe it must have required mind to construct it. We are all deeply indebted to this great thinker for his noble vindication of a spiritual conception of nature at a time when materialism was rampant. Since then a change has come over the field of thought. Even Tyndall's famous aphorism has been discovered to be less materialistic than when the public utterance of it sent a cold shiver through the British Isles. For it is perceived that the matter which could contain so much as the President of the British Association ascribed to it must be a much more subtle existence than that dead, inert substance to which the name is popularly given. Thus gradually a more spiritual conception

of the universe has dawned on the minds of thinkers, and a greater readiness to allow that physical laws do not account for the sum-total of existence.

No doubt this change is in a large measure the reward of a wiser attitude towards science on the part of responsible religious teachers. Here we come to the other aspect of the mutual relation of religion and science, the immense effect of science on religion. It is not merely that certain results of science have been allowed—perhaps at first somewhat grudgingly—by the defenders of the faith. From ignoring science, or fearing it, or viewing it with suspicion and jealousy, devout, intelligent Christian people have come to welcome it open-armed, admitting their duty to yield to the imperial rights of truth, even though these may run counter to long-cherished tenets. Holding at heart the deep assurance that the God of nature is one and the same Being as the Father revealed to us in Jesus Christ, such people believe that in the end there can be no conflict between true religion and science, which is methodised truth. An instance of this temper of mind may be seen in the *Bampton Lectures*, on "The Relation between Religion and Science," of 1884, by Dr. Temple, now Archbishop of Canterbury. The immense popularity of the late Professor Drummond's book, *Natural Law in the Spiritual*

World was an indication of the eagerness with which people were prepared to welcome the alliance of religion and science. That book illustrates in an extreme form a tendency which is more commendable when more moderately followed out. Its weakness has been seen in too great a readiness to mistake analogy for argument, and thus to see parallels between natural laws and spiritual processes where they do not exist. Religion is not primarily a matter of necessary law; it belongs to the region of the will, to the region of personality. Nevertheless this importation of the methods of science into questions of religion is one of the marked features of the century. Theology, haughtily claiming to be the queen of the sciences, had refused to submit to any of the rules of science, a piece of folly punished with a just nemesis, in that it was treated with contempt by men of science. Now, while religion may be very unscientific, religion is a very different thing from theology, and theology is nothing if it is not a science.

Referring to this matter in his sermon before the British Association at Dover in September, 1899, Archdeacon Wilson said :

> There is going on a revolution in method. It is so complete as to make it seem as if it were the very texture of the human mind and the nature of logic were being transformed. We read, as some one has said, Plato's argument for the immor-

tality of the soul with wonder that it could ever have seemed convincing or even relevant. But we have something of the same sort of feeling when we open some of the books of theology and their countless modern reproductions. We feel that their intellectual processes differ in some way radically from ours; we hesitate and find chasms in logic where they found not even a flaw: formulas were satisfactory and nutritious to them which to us are meaningless and arid.

Biblical criticism, for instance, as we know it to-day, is the result of the application of scientific processes to the literary problems of Scripture; and for this reason it makes some of the old pre-scientific methods of interpretation simply impossible. These scientific processes involve a rigorous exclusion of mere assumptions, a full and careful induction of all the evidence, a strict, unbiassed process of arriving at conclusions, an orderly arrangement and classification of the knowledge thus attained. It would be foolish to call science such as this irreverent or presumptuous; the irreverence and presumption consist in dispensing with the modesty, the caution, the toil that it demands.

The change produced by the advance of science in the ideas of men and women concerning Nature in its relations to religion may be especially illustrated in the case of geology. At the beginning of the century it was assumed by Christian people that the universe was created 4,000 years before the birth of Christ, in six literal days, each order of being coming

suddenly into completion, as described in *Paradise Lost;* that death was not known among even the animals before Adam ate the apple; that the fossils observed in various strata of the earth and the indications of sediments even on the hill-tops were due to the Noah's flood which was assumed to have covered the whole face of the globe. Thus when we turn to a well-known leading commentary such as Adam Clarke's, we read: "The word heavens must, therefore, comprehend the whole solar system, as it is very likely the whole of this was created in these six days." . . . "I suppose the whole solar system was created at this time" (*Commentary*, on Genesis i. 6). This goes beyond the region of geology. But even within that region the old assumptions are startling enough to us who look back on them from the wholly different standpoint now attained. When geology first appeared with its demonstration of the untenableness of such positions, it was assailed as a "Godless science." In the year 1834 Sedgwick, Professor of Geology at Cambridge declared:

A philosopher may smile at the fulminations of the Vatican against those who, with Copernicus, maintained the motion of the earth, but he ought to sigh when he finds that the heart of man is no better than it was of old, and that his arrogance and folly are still the same. . . . There are still found some who dare to affirm that the pursuits of natural science are hostile to religion. An assertion more

false in itself, or more dishonourable to the cause of true religion, has not been conceived in the mind of man.*

When it was found useless to ignore, deny, or denounce the facts that geologists had brought to light, the next step was to attempt to explain them away, and, at the same time, distort the Scripture so as to make the two fit together. Referring to these attempts, Professor Sedgwick proceeds:

> But there is another class of men who pursue geology by a nearer road (*i.e.*, nearer than that patiently trod by the men of science), and are guided by a different light. Well-intentioned they may be; but they have betrayed no small self-sufficiency, along with a shameful want of knowledge of the fundamental facts they presume to write about. Hence, they have dishonoured the literature of this country by "Mosaic Geology," "Scripture Geology," and other works of cosmogony with kindred titles; wherein they have overlooked the aim and end of revelation, tortured the book of life out of its proper meaning, and wantonly contrived to bring about a collision between natural phenomena and the Word of God.†

It was in this condition of affairs that Dr. Pye Smith, then theological tutor at Homerton College, applied himself to the study of geology with an open mind and a determination to discover the truth and proclaim it. A modest, retiring, sensitive man, he deserves high honour for the courageous attitude he then took up. In the *Congregational Union Lecture* for 1839 Dr. Pye Smith discusses, as his title pro-

* *Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge*, page 148.

† Ibid.

mises, "The Relation between the Holy Scriptures and some parts of Geological Science." Setting out with "a vindication of geology," he proceeds to expound some of its proved results showing among other things how it demonstrates (1) the great antiquity of the earth, and (2) the existence of death in the world long before the time of Adam. On the question of the flood, he brings forward arguments for and against its universality; the latter he sets out with great force, suggesting that if the sea were let in to a depression in Asia it would have sufficed for its purpose in being universal as regards mankind. With Dr. Pye Smith we are still in the period of the harmonists, when enlightened Scripture advocates, while frankly admitting all the facts of science, endeavour to show how the sacred text may be explained in agreement with them.

The next stage was that at which attempts at explaining the scientific accuracy of the Bible were abandoned as irrelevant and mischievous, the Scriptures being taken as a revelation of religion, but not of science. This is the position of Dr. Temple in his *Bampton Lectures*. Thus he says: "It is quite certain . . . that the purpose of the revelation is not to teach science at all,"* and again, "There is

* Page 181.

no more reason for setting aside geology, because it does not agree in detail with Genesis, than there is for setting aside astronomy because through all the Old Testament the sun is spoken of as going round the earth";* and, further, "The writer of the book of Genesis, like all other writers of the Bible, took Nature as he saw it, and expressed his teaching in language corresponding to what he saw."†

Surely this is the only wise and safe position to take up—the only safe position because it is the only wise and true one. Meanwhile, geology has followed in the wake of astronomy, accomplishing in the realm of time what its sister science accomplished in the realm of space—an enlargement of our mental horizon which cannot but re-act on our thought of the Creator and Sustainer of a universe now seen to be vastly greater and immeasurably more ancient than our ancestors had supposed. At the recent Dover meeting of the British Association, Sir Archibald Geikie claimed a hundred million years as the minimum time during which there has been life on our earth, as witnessed to by geology. Some have demanded four hundred and even a thousand million years to account for the fossil remains in the various strata. The six thousand years universally accepted by Christian people a century ago are but

* Page 183. † Page 188.

as a moment compared with these awful ages of the world's history. But we listen to discussions about all such geological questions with perfect equanimity, never for a moment dreaming that they menace our faith, only associating them with religious belief as they tend to exalt the glory of Him who inhabits eternity, to whom a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is passed! This is an indication of real progress in the enlargement of Christian thought.

But we have yet to take account of the most remarkable movement of science in our day. While in a general way this may be called the century of science, within the domain of science it must be reckoned as pre-eminently the century of Evolution. The doctrine of Evolution stands out as the most significant idea of the age. It is not too much to say that since the Copernican theory transformed men's whole conception of the Universe, showing that the earth was but a small planet circling round the sun, instead of being the centre about which the sun and all the stars as well as the moon revolved as attendant lights, no idea of equal magnitude had appeared to completely transform men's views of nature. For some time speculators had been feeling their way towards an evolutionary theory of the universe. In philosophy Hegel had

prepared for some such conception of the course of things. Lamarck had actually sketched out an evolutionary theory which, with the fuller scientific knowledge of later times, Herbert Spencer carried further, in his *First Principles*. Then, in an anonymous work entitled, *Vestiges of Creation*, Robert Chambers ventured to propose an ingenious scheme of the evolution of living beings on this planet. But hitherto speculation lacked scientific demonstration. The great revelation came when Wallace and Darwin simultaneously arrived at the idea of natural selection by the survival of the fittest through a careful induction of the facts of nature. The epoch-making event in the science of the century was the publication on November 24, 1859, of the *Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin. The book was received with severe reprobation where it was not treated with contempt. *The Edinburgh Review* condemned it for "signs of defective information which contribute almost at each chapter to check our confidence in the teachings and advocacy of the hypothesis of natural selection."*

The *Quarterly* Reviewer is more trenchant in his criticism. After complimenting Darwin on his scientific attainments and the charming style in which he sets forth their results, he proceeds to

* *Edinburgh Review*, No. CCXXVI., page 528.

examine the specific teaching of the book, and expresses his conclusion in the following words:—

> We think it difficult to find a theory fuller of assumptions and of assumptions not grounded upon alleged facts in nature, but which are absolutely opposed to all the facts we have been able to observe.*

Further on he asks,

> On what, then, is the new theory based? We say it with unfeigned regret, in dealing with such a man as Mr. Darwin, on the merest hypothesis, supported by the most unbounded assumptions.†

Again,

> Such a notion is absolutely incompatible, not only with single expressions in the Word of God . . . on that subject of natural science with which it is not immediately concerned; but which, in our judgment, is of far more importance, with the whole representation of that moral and spiritual condition of man which is its proper subject-matter.‡
>
> Nor can we doubt, secondly, that this view, which thus contradicts the revealed relation of the creation to its Creator, is equally inconsistent with the fulness of His glory.§

Here the *odium theologicum* is imported into the controversy to the discredit of the Reviewer, who, nevertheless, concludes with a contemptuous statement that,

> Under such influences man soon goes back to the marvelling stare of childhood at the centaurs and hippogriffs of fancy.‖

The British Quarterly Review did not even con-

* *Quarterly Review*. No. 215, July, 1860. Page 237.
† Ibid. Page 248. ‡ Ibid. Page 250.
§ Ibid. Page 258. ‖ Ibid. Page 264.

descend to notice the book, although it had a section devoted to works of science. A year or two later, this periodical contained an elaborate article on the origin of life without the slightest allusion to Darwin.

But it was not long before the unpopular theory fought its way into recognition, first among men of science, then in the minds of the intelligent public. Owen, the great osteologist, who had long held out against it, before his death confessed himself a convert to Evolution. In the *Bampton Lectures* already alluded to, Dr. Temple fully accepts the theory of Evolution, and shows that it is not incompatible with Christian faith. He goes further, and argues that it enhances our estimate of the greatness of the work of God in creation, lightens our difficulties in view of the imperfections of nature, and "restores to the science of nature the unity which we should expect in the creation of God."*

These lectures of Dr. Temple's were published in the year 1885. Two years later Messrs. Nesbit and Co., a firm usually associated with literature of a distinctly Evangelical stamp, issued a volume of essays on *Christianity and Evolution*, contributed to by Dr. George Matheson, Rev. T. W. Fowle, Sir George W. Cox, Mr. Joseph John Murphy

* "The Relations between Religion and Science," Lecture IV.

—whose work, entitled *The Basis of Faith*, has been a help to many unsettled minds—together with other writers, in which it was attempted to show how the leading Christian doctrines might be regarded in harmony with the doctrine of Evolution. But the books written by Christian believers on similar lines are simply innumerable. Conspicuous among them is Professor Drummond's *Ascent of Man* in which that noted evangelist and charming writer expounds the most obnoxious part of the theory of Evolution, its relation to man, and shows its agreement with the highest Christian truth, and later Mr. Griffith-Jones's able book, *The Ascent through Christ*. Difficulties have been propounded with respect to some of Darwin's positions ; he himself supplemented his main theory with an hypothesis of additional influences in his work on *Sexual Selection*; many Evolutionists believe that other influences as yet undiscovered may be at work in the great process of development—still they are Evolutionists. Evolution has won all along the line. The latest rival to this theory was Weissmann's hypothesis concerning heredity, according to which acquired properties are not transmitted. But his position has not been widely admitted by other men of science. Evolution holds the field. Among Christian men it holds it side by side with a full belief in God

and His creating and sustaining power. Thirty years ago it required some courage for a speaker in a Christian assembly to own himself an Evolutionist; to-day it would require about as much courage for one to declare that he rejected the now popular doctrine. Evolution is not only recognised in nature. The principle is applied to history and literature, and in fact to all branches of investigation. Biblical criticism, the relation of the separate parts of the Bible one to another, the development of revelation, are now regarded as coming under some aspects of Evolution. Social problems are studied in the light of this doctrine. This means a complete transformation of our methods of thought and ways of regarding truth. So far has the victory of the doctrine of Evolution proceeded that we need to be reminded that there are truths touching the will, moral obligation, the personality of God and man, and the eternal verities, which must not be lost sight of in a too restricted regard for what is, after all, but a process of "becoming."

V.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

BIBLICAL CRITICISM.

We must exercise a not inconsiderable effort of imagination when we try to set before ourselves a fair conception of the way in which the Bible was viewed by English people a hundred years ago. Rigid traditional ideas then prevailed as regards both the historical character of the books and the nature of the inspiration ascribed to them. It was assumed as settled facts that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, David a considerable part of the Psalter, Solomon the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles, Isaiah the whole of the book that bears his name, St. Paul probably Hebrews as well as all the epistles ascribed to him; and, in general, that all the books of Scripture were written by the men whose names appear with their titles in our modern editions of the Bible. The early chapters of Genesis were read as literal history, and the narratives in the Pentateuch, Daniel, Jonah, and Esther accepted with as unquestioning belief as those in Samuel and Kings. That the fall of man and his mortality were

directly caused by Adam eating real, tangible fruit, after listening to the temptation that came from the mouth of a real, live serpent, was regarded as an essential part of God's revelation. In the New Testament, what is called the "synoptic problem" was not generally allowed to exist for Englishmen. The four Gospels were simply four parallel narratives of the life of Christ, written in each case by the men whose names they bear, with the result, as Chrysostom had said, that the agreements between the evangelists proved their truthfulness and their differences their independence. Not even the slightest discrepancies were to be admitted; any appearance of the kind was to be explained away. The ideas of Biblical criticism then prevalent among responsible scholars may be gathered from Horne's "Introduction," long used as the standard text-book for theological students.

Concurrently with these conservative notions of the historical character of the Bible there was maintained a stiff and almost rabbinical theory of inspiration. Scripture was held to be the Word of God in form and expression as well as in essence and spirit. To doubt the perfect accuracy of any statement found within the covers of the Sacred Book was a sign of dangerous scepticism; to admit an apparent error in some matter-of-fact statement was a mark

of infidelity. The human personality of the writers was reduced to zero. They were simply "inspired penmen." Even when it was allowed that there might be various degrees or different kinds of inspiration this was with the proviso that it was always sufficient to secure infallibility. Thus in a letter to *The Times* newspaper Keble writes:—

> The New Testament declares the Old Testament to be inspired of God; accordingly the Book of Esther to be as really inspired as the Evangelical Prophet, *as really though not as largely.* But since it is so inspired men know that they are bound to believe every word of it, and if contradictions appear to feel sure that they will one day disappear, either by amended readings or by satisfactory explanations. . . . All are equally true, although all do not contain an equal amount of Divine Truth.*

That is the point—"All are equally true," therefore we "are bound to believe every word." Keble's position in this statement was that generally admitted in all quarters during the first half of the present century.

But larger ideas were already stirring. In the year 1840 appeared Coleridge's posthumous work, *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit.* The fascinating, autobiographical form of this short book, its outspoken honesty, the philosophic grasp and power of its author, and the eloquence of its more

* *John Keble,* by Walter Lock, pp. 181, 182.

elevated passages, carrying all before them with a flood of indignant protests, give it an importance in regard to Biblical criticism far beyond its own pretensions. Coleridge saw the hollowness and unreality of conventional notions about the Bible, and declared with reference to them that "in all superstition there is a heart of unbelief." He raised the question whether it was necessary or expedient to insist on the belief of the Divine origin and authority of all and every part of the canonical books as the condition, or the first principle, of Christian faith. Might not the due appreciation of Scripture collectively be more safely relied on as the result and consequence of belief in Christ? He confessed his own profound reverence for Scripture, declaring, "I neither can, nor dare, throw off a strong and awful prepossession in its favour."* His ultimate grounds for accepting its authority were found in his own experience of its effects. Thus he writes, "In short, whatever finds me, bears witness for itself that it has proceeded from a Holy Spirit, &c.," and declares "that the words of the Bible find me at greater depth of my being; and that, therefore, whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit." †

Coleridge objects to the idea that everything in

* *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, p. 8. † *Ibid.*, p. 13.

the Bible was dictated by an infallible intelligence, discovering no such claim to be made by the writers themselves. The doctrine in question, he says, "petrifies at once the whole body of Holy Writ, with all its harmonies and symmetrical gradations," making the flexible rigid. Then in a passage of superb eloquence he declaims against the application of the conventional theory of inspiration to Deborah's Song, declaring indignantly that this utterance of the mother in Israel, "the impassioned, high-souled, heroic woman, who had dwelt under her palm tree in the depth of the mountains," loses its interest, if, as he says, it is "but a 'Divina Commedia' of a superhuman—bear with me if I say, ventriloquist." Further on he denounces the notion that the Psalmist of Israel was himself "as mere an instrument as his harp." He reminds us that it was as a result of the application of this theory that "Sir Matthew Hale sent crazy old women to the gallows in honour of the witch of Endor." Dealing with the method of interpretation then in vogue—and continued too long after the time of Coleridge—he insists on the evil of "forced, fantastic interpretation, allegory, and bringing together into logical dependence detached sentences from books composed at a distance of centuries, nay, sometimes a millennium from one another,

under different dispensations, and for different objects."*

In opposition to the mechanical theory he was combating, Coleridge insisted on such a way of treating the Bible as allowed free play for the human element, while admitting its Divine authority for the Christian believer who had felt its appeal to his own consciousness.

These enlightened views of Coleridge were slow to make their way in face of age-long prejudice; but meanwhile the traditional attitude was being deranged from another quarter. Biblical criticism had advanced considerably in Germany before it obtained any footing in England, where it was long shunned with pious horror as one of the most mischievous products of "neology." When a serious attempt to bring it under the notice of our insular theological students was made by a man who stood foremost in British Biblical scholarship, it was received with a storm of opprobrium. The publishers of Horne's "Introduction," seeing that this standard work had become antiquated, entrusted the preparation of a new edition of the Old Testament volume to Dr. Samuel Davidson, then a tutor at Lancashire Independent College. So great were the

* *Confessions of an Enquiring Spirit*, p. 63.

changes he felt to be called for that Dr. Davidson—with the complete approval of the publishers—rewrote the volume as a new work, which was issued in the year 1856. Here we find the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch abandoned, and a theory of its gradual development through successive centuries expounded and advocated. Undoubtedly that was a startling position to take up; and everybody must admit that its champion evinced no little daring in maintaining it when he knew that it was certain to be intensely unpopular. Possibly in the controversy that followed Dr. Davidson might have taken more care not to exasperate his opponents by assuming a needlessly scornful attitude towards what he could not but regard as bigoted obscurantism in the seat of authority; but nobody can deny his loyalty to what he believed to be truth, which he would never compromise out of consideration for his own interests.

Dr. Tregelles, who was to have edited a later volume of Horne's "Introduction," wrote to *The Record* newspaper saying that his reputation would suffer if he were associated with a work in which such views as Dr. Davidson had expressed were contained. The matter was brought before the college committee by one of the members, who stated, with deep emotion, that he had received

numerous letters expressing much alarm at what Dr. Davidson had written. Then Dr. Davidson was asked to write an explanation, in particular, that he might dispel vague reports concerning his orthodoxy. He did so, fully vindicating his adherence to evangelical doctrines, but at the same time justifying his assertion that there were errors in the Bible. *The Banner* and *The British Standard* demanded his dismissal, and a resolution was carried in the College Committee pronouncing his explanations to be unsatisfactory. Thereupon the professor resigned. Subsequently, in the 1868 edition of his "Introduction" to the New Testament, Dr. Davidson advocated the advanced critical position of the Tübingen school, a position to which he adhered in later years even after it had been discredited. But these views were not adopted till subsequent to his removal from Lancashire College, which was on the ground of his opinions in connection with the criticism of the Pentateuch. It is a remarkable testimony to the changed condition of public opinion that, at the jubilee celebration of the college, Dr. Davidson was repeatedly referred to in terms of highest admiration. He lived to see the positions for which, as their pioneer, he had suffered martyrdom widely accepted by British scholarship and his own Christian character reverently honoured.

The year 1860 saw the publication of *Essays and Reviews*—a collection of seven essays by various writers, which read harmlessly enough in the present day; and yet at the time of their appearance they exited great alarm as the culmination of the dreaded "liberalism" that Newman and his friends had been strenuously opposing. The first essay, which was by Dr. Temple, the present Archbishop of Canterbury, developed the idea of God's education of the world, on lines somewhat similar to Lessing's brilliant book on the same subject. Dr. Temple here maintained the position that the principle of private judgment puts conscience between us and the Bible. Godwin's essay on the "Mosaic Cosmogony," in the same volume, aimed at reconciling Genesis and geology, with the belief that the Biblical account of Creation could be shown to be in accordance with fact. But the most important essay was Jowett's on "The Interpretation of Scripture." The following is his own summary of the positions contended for in this essay:

Of what has been said this is the sum: That Scripture, like other books, has one meaning, which is to be gathered from itself without reference to the adaptations of Fathers or divines, and without regard to *à priori* notions about its nature and origin. It is to be interpreted like other books, with attention to the character of its authors and the prevailing state of civilisation and knowledge, with allowance for peculiarities of style and language, and modes of thought and figures of speech. Yet not without a sense that as we read there grows upon us the witness of God in the world, antici-

pating in a rude and primitive age the truth that was to be, shining more and more unto the perfect day in the life of Christ, which again is reflected from different points of view in the teaching of His apostles.*

In this essay the late Master of Balliol lays down the lines that are now almost universally followed by intelligent interpreters of Scripture. When he wrote they were novelties; now they are commonplaces. The essay, however, which was selected for attack was that in which Mr. Rowland Williams gave an account of Bunsen's "Biblical Researches," and in accepting its conclusions committed himself to some of the positions of the higher criticism. High Churchmen and Evangelicals joined in a prosecution for heresy. The charge was to the effect that the tendency of the essay was to disseminate unbelief in the Divine inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture, to deny prophetic predictions and miracles, or explain them in an unorthodox way, and to explain away the articles of the creed. The trial took place in the Court of Arches before Dr. Lushington, Sir James Stephen defending. It resulted in a judgment for the defendants, which declared the the legality of Biblical criticism in the Established Church.

Soon after the publication of *Essays and*

* Reprinted in Jowett's *Dissertations, &c.*, page 73.

Reviews, a much more alarming work appeared, and this gave rise to considerable perturbation. In 1862 and the following year Dr. Colenso, Bishop of Natal, brought out three volumes on the Pentateuch. His attention had been drawn to the subject by the childlike but seaching questions of his native converts as to whether the marvellous things recorded therein had truly happened. As the result of his studies, he came to the conclusion that the extremely minute and highly wrought ecclesiastical legislation of Numbers and Leviticus was the work of an age later by many centuries than that to which it professedly belonged. He detected in Deuteronomy passages composed after the settlement of the Jews in Palestine and resemblances to the style of Jeremiah. The historical books showed that the law had never been carried out before the captivity, and that the popular religion till the times of the great prophets was a debased idolatry. There was not much of a very novel character in these volumes of Dr. Colenso's for those who were familiar with the course of recent German criticism on the Old Testament. But the work contained the first full English discussion of the subject; and it came from a bishop! From all sides there rose indignant demands that the author of such a book should resign his office in the Church. Shaken at first by

the storm of opprobrium, Dr. Colenso hesitated for a time, but ultimately he decided that it was his duty to stand, in order to vindicate his right to hold the views he had set forth. One unhappy result of the controversy was that Maurice, who had been an intimate friend of Colenso, was so shocked at the opinions he had developed as to break off all intercourse with his old friend. Bishop Gray, as Metropolitan of Capetown, claimed to exercise coercive jurisdiction over Colenso; this Bishop also protested against the tyranny of the secular courts, and would not submit to them his claim of a right to depose the Bishop of Natal. Thus the controversy was complicated by the introduction of a vexatious question of Church discipline. Colenso repudiated the claim advanced by Bishop Gray, who, however, pronounced his deposition on December 16, 1873. Not admitting the jurisdiction, Colenso disregarded the pretended act of deposition as *ultra vires*, and appealed to the Crown. The case came before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which pronounced the whole proceedings null and void, and left Colenso in the undisturbed possession of his see. On his return to Natal the persecuted bishop was welcomed with unexpected warmth. Known and honoured in Africa as the indefatigable defender of the rights of the natives against the

aggression of the whites, he was regarded in ecclesiastical circles as a dangerous heretic. Archbishop Longley declared that he and his colleagues could not receive Colenso as a brother bishop without identifying themselves with his errors. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge treated him as canonically deposed, and transferred their grants to the Bishop of Capetown; and the clergyman who called himself "Vicar-general of the Bishop of Capetown" bade him depart from the House of God as one who had been handed over to the power of the evil one. His native converts were warned against him. All this he bore with exemplary patience; and meanwhile crowds listened to his sermons. A further step was taken. The trustees of the Bishops' Fund refused to pay him his salary. This matter was brought before the Rolls Court, where Lord Romilly decided that Colenso was still Bishop of Natal. Time is the great healer, and after years of quiet work for the benefit of his flock, when Dr. Colenso died his heresies were almost forgotten and his memory was honoured as that of the greatest friend of the native people of South Africa.

The publication of an English translation of Wellhausen's *Introduction to the History of Israel*,

and Professor Robertson Smith's article "Israel," in the new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, drawing attention to the problems of Old Testament criticism, gradually prepared for an open and unprejudiced discussion of the subject, with the result that opinions which had been regarded but a few years before as utterly untenable by Christian believers came to be viewed by many devout scholars as not only in accordance with the facts of history, but also as in no way upsetting to Christian faith. Nevertheless, Robertson Smith's article led to the removal of this most accomplished man from his chair at the Free Church college in Edinburgh, an example which was followed by the Presbyterians of America in the deposition of Dr. Briggs from his post of professor for advocating similar views. But the leaven was spreading. In connection with the "International Theological Library," confessedly a series of text-books of the first rank in scholarship and utility, Dr. Driver wrote his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, a work that at once took rank as the leading English authority on the subject. In this book the critical conclusions such as the composite character and post-exilic editing of the Pentateuch, the division of Isaiah, the late date and non-historicity of Daniel, are admitted and explained as settled

verdicts of scholarship, although Dr. Driver's position is not so extreme as that of Dr. Cheyne and some other leading critics. Two works of representative Biblical scholarship, now in process of publication, afford striking proof of the progress of Biblical criticism. One is Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*, the other the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. These great undertakings promise to do for the new age what Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* accomplished for the previous generation. It is needless to compare the confessedly advanced position of the *Encyclopædia*—which is edited by Dr. Cheyne—with the old standard Bible Dictionary; its critical radicalism is extreme and unhesitating. But it may not be without significance to take its more conservative rival, and set that by the side of Smith's Dictionary, which had defended the traditional views throughout, while the new work exhibits what we may regard as the more moderate critical position now generally accepted by scholarship. In the Old Testament these include the composite character and late date of the Pentateuch, the composite character of Isaiah and other of the prophets, the Maccabean origin of Daniel and the non-historical character of that book, of Jonah, and of Esther. On the other hand, this work shows the comparatively conservative trend of much modern New Testament

criticism. It is true that this is incomparably more advanced than Smith's Dictionary, but it is in harmony with the general movement of the later scholarship back from the extreme position taken up by critics of the school of Baur and Davidson. The early date and historicity of the Gospels, the authenticity of the Epistles attributed to St. Paul and the genuineness of all the most important New Testament books are here advocated. These are positions to which criticism generally has been converging of late during recent years.

Accompanying the critical results of the literary and historical study of Scripture there has necessarily come about a complete modification of the idea of Inspiration. It is plain that the rabbinical notion of verbal inerrancy has no longer any ground to stand upon. History and science, as well as criticism, come in to warn us against the once accepted idea that the Bible is a sort of encyclopædia of sure information on all the matters that are in any way alluded to in its pages. It is growingly felt that the inspiration of the writers was limited to their mission as teachers of religion, and further that even there it did not secure them fulness of knowledge, or we could have had no progress in revelation. And yet it is now seen that the Divine authority of the spiritual truths of the Bible

shines out as clearly as ever in proportion as they are apprehended, nay, with a more enlightening and stimulating effect now that they are no longer received merely as authoritative statements, but are recognised as calling for intelligent apprehension on the part of the reader.

It is not to be supposed that this condition has been reached without much hesitancy on the part of many, or that all people are in a condition to appreciate it. Some persons still feel a serious difficulty in regard to our Lord's references to the Old Testament. Still, in this matter, wiser views than once were held are gradually coming to the front. Nothing could be more disastrous than to tie down our notion of the authority of Jesus Christ to certain literary judgments. Earlier in the century the appeal was made with the utmost confidence, apparently without the faintest perception of the mischievous effects that would follow the inevitable reversal of the argument. Thus, in his lectures on *The Connection and Harmony of the Old and New Testaments*, Dr. W. Lindsay Alexander writes with reference to Old Testament allusions made by our Lord and His apostles:

> In the first place, they furnish the attestation of infallible authority to the actual historical character of the incidents referred to. Many of these—such, for instance, as the temptation of our first parents, the swallowing of Jonah by a

fish, and others of the same sort—are of such a nature, that by a little ingenuity they may be explained away as mere myths and parables which had no existence save in the fertile imagination of some ancient poet or sage. But the fact of their being referred to by the New Testament writers as illustrative of their reasonings and exhortations is plainly destructive of all such attempts.*

A very different attitude is taken up by Canon Gore in *Lux Mundi*, and one which it may be said represents the growing conviction of devout and thoughtful students of recent times. It is to decline to appeal to the authority of Christ and the apostles on questions of Old Testament literary history, on the ground that they make no claim to afford light in reference to such subjects. Thus, after describing some of the results of Old Testament criticism, he writes:

It may be fairly represented that if Christ had intended to convey instruction to us on critical questions which are within the scope of natural knowledge, He would have made His purpose plainer.†

And again:

For, without doubt, if, consistently with entire loyalty to our Lord and His Church, we can regard as open the questions specified above, we are removing great obstacles from the path to belief of many who certainly wish to believe, and do not exhibit any undue scepticism.‡

Nor can it be said that the position so openly taken by Canon Gore in *Lux Mundi* is at all

* *Connection and Harmony of the Old and New Testaments*, p. 31.
† *Lux Mundi*, p. 359. ‡ *Ibid.*, p. 261.

singular. It represents the growing tendency of enlightened thought among earnest believers in the Divine nature and authority of our Lord. Thus, in the Hartley Lecture, delivered before the Primitive Methodist Conference at Grimsby, on June 14, 1899, the Rev. Peter Bryant said:

> We need not be over-anxious to find in the utterances of the Lord Jesus support for or against critical views and opinions as to the question of human authorship, seeing that the Lord Jesus cannot be said to have intentionally spoken on that particular question. And again, the application and appropriateness of a particular psalm to Jesus Christ does not lie in the truthfulness of the tradition that David wrote that psalm.

That is the point to which we are being brought, not only by the larger way of regarding our Lord's treatment of the Old Testament, but also by a frank acceptance of the general results of criticism. These results remove stumbling-blocks from the path to faith by showing that what were once reckoned Bible difficulties—to be explained away by an exercise of ingenuity that came perilously near to disingenuousness, because if not so removed they were provocative of distrust in the whole message of the Gospel—are really not difficulties at all, but only indications, in some cases of the gradual development of Divine revelation, in others of extraneous literary and historical facts that do not touch the vital truth of that revelation.

VI.

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD.

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD.

When we come to consider more specifically the contents of thought about religion during the century and begin with the central theme—the idea of God—we cannot but perceive that a very great change has come over our minds with regard to it. Perhaps we should not be going too far if we were to say that among all the changes in theology that have been witnessed during the last hundred years this is the greatest, the most revolutionary. The eighteenth-century idea of God was dominated by deism, even in orthodox circles. God was thought of apart from the universe as seated in solitary glory, inhabiting some remote region called heaven, whence He issued mandates for the administration of His dominions. He was pictured as the Great Architect who had planned the order of the universe and then carried it out by a series of ingenious contrivances. This was at some definite period of time; and after the primary work of creation was completed, after that one busy week recorded in Genesis was over, God was supposed to have entered

on His age-long Sabbath rest, leaving the vast machine He had constructed to run by means of the initial force He had imparted to it, like a clock wound up and set going. Nevertheless, there were slight exceptions to this rule. God did not entirely desert the world; He watched over its movements from His serene abode in the distant heavens, and when He saw it going wrong, as it was apt to go occasionally, the clockwork getting deranged, He would interfere. This interference was of two kinds—by what were called "Special Providences," and more rarely by means of miracles. The special providences did not reveal His hand in any overt act. Here the interference was unseen, although to the thoughtful observer it might be discovered by its remarkable results, just the right thing happening at the very moment when it was needed to help some favoured person in difficulty. The miracle was a much rarer occurrence, only happening in Bible times to authenticate some Divine revelation. At least, that was the Protestant view of its limitations. With this conception of God and His manner of acting on the universe, it was inevitable that men's ideas of His relations with the human world should partake of an external character. It is true that among devout people a heartfelt faith in the Holy Spirit which was revived

in the Methodist and Evangelical movements happily modified the feeling of Divine remoteness. Yet God was still thought of as dwelling in the heights above. The personality of God was held in a very anthropomorphic way, which Matthew Arnold ridiculed with his irreverent comparison of the popular notion of the Trinity to three magnified Lord Shaftesburys.

A great change has come over us in regard to this whole subject. In place of the Divine transcendence of a hundred years ago we have come to believe in the immanence of God. We think of Him not only as formally omnipresent, but as living in the midst of His creatures, nay, as living in them, the very source and spring of their life and activity. We do not conceive that He created the universe at some distant point of time and then left it in the main to its own resources; we rather maintain that He is the ever-present, living, acting centre and fountain of all life and being. The danger is that this should drift into pantheism, that the thought of the Divine Personality should merge in the Divine immanence, that the awe of God's majesty should decline before the sense of His nearness, that human responsibility and the conscience of sin should fade before the all-embracing idea of God's action within as well as around us.

But the Divine immanence is not pantheism; it does not deny the real personality of God; it does not exclude the will-power of man and his consequent responsibility. It is an addition to, not a substitute for, the personal conception of God; and difficult as the explanation may be, it does not, because it cannot, set aside our inner consciousness of will, obligation, duty, and guilt.

Now we have to inquire how this great change has come about, and further, what consequences it has involved. First, as to the causes of so vast a modification of our conceptions of God in relation to man and the universe. Although this is not in itself pantheistic, it would seem to be due in part to the influence of pantheism. Ultimately it may be largely traced back to Spinoza. How great is the change in the world's estimate of the Jew thinker! In his own day, when the deep thoughts he had brooded over while engaged on his humble task of grinding spectacle-glasses in a lonely garret came out to the public notice, Spinoza was denounced as an atheist; and now, after generations of reproach, he is accepted, if not, as Novalis described him, as a "God-intoxicated man," yet still as a thinker who contributes invaluable aid to our conception of God. Spinoza identifies the universe with God, or rather with the expression of God, who there manifests

Himself in two ways—as extension in what we call "matter," and as thought in what we call "mind." All the higher thought in religion is now more or less influenced by Spinoza's conceptions and principles.

Without attempting to show how Hegel's identification of object and subject, of being and thought, tends to destroy the conception of the transcendence of the Absolute, and coming to regions of thought that are more familiar, we cannot but feel the impulse of the new movement of thought in the greatest teachers of the century, both poets and prose writers. It has been said that there is an element of pantheism in Wordsworth's earlier poetry; but it would be more just to assert that what we there discover is a feeling of the immanence of God. This is what comes out in the short poem where, after describing the sudden sense of shame and awe that came over him as a boy when he had ruthlessly ravaged a hitherto undisturbed copse while nutting, he exclaims—

> There is a Spirit in the woods.

Then a generation ago teachers of religion in England as well as in America were widely influenced by Emerson's pantheistic thought, in whose essays on "Nature" and the "Over-Soul" we see a power, a presence, a life, suffusing all being and infusing

itself into all life, so that what is best is realised in us only when we let "the soul have its way through us."

With Matthew Arnold agnosticism has begun its blinding process, though the great critic utters a trenchant protest against its application to ethics, perceiving a "power not ourselves that makes for righteousness." As Arnold declines to affirm the personality of the all-pervading power we cannot name this God in any true sense of the word, and yet his notion brings before those who venture on a fuller faith in a Divine Person the thought of His immanence in the region of morals. He is not simply the primary Lawgiver who has enjoined our duty, and the ultimate Judge who will call us to account when our probation is over, as the eighteenth-century theology taught. He is a present influence, always pressing in upon us the urgency of righteousness. In justice to Matthew Arnold we should recognise that his clear insistence of this point has been a positive contribution to our thoughts of the Unseen, although the thinness of his idea of what was behind has left it, in his own teaching, a detached mystery entirely unaccounted for.

Among the chief influences that contributed to bring home to the present age the thought of the

Divine immanence must be mentioned that of Green, of Oxford. In so far as his teaching has been a reflection of Hegelianism it may be regarded as one of the principal media through which that philosophy has entered English thought. But since this has entered English thought, by so doing it has taken on an English complexion. Now it is easy to express dissatisfaction at the negative character of Green's results when his principles are applied to various regions of religious belief. The most recent tendency among us is to reject the Hegelian explanation of the universe as failing to account either for Divine personality or human responsibility. But on the positive side of his teaching Green has forced us to see that God is not merely here or there, at one moment or another, but ever-present and ever-active in all nature, all life, all thought.

Lastly, in a similar direction we have the teaching of Principal Caird, of Glasgow, whose *Philosophy of Religion*, while it moves in regions of Hegelian thought, is, apart from its metaphysical pre-suppositions, a powerful exposition of the idea of the Divine immanence. These are some of the leaders of thought who have helped to bring out the idea; but many subtle influences have contributed to this result.

In the second place, let us see how this great

thought of the immanence of God affects various regions of experience. We may consider it briefly in five of its aspects—in relation to Nature, Providence, Miracles, Inspiration, and Faith.

1. First with regard to Nature. We now abandon the old mechanical conception of the universe as a machine cunningly contrived, so that when once it is set going it is able to run with its own impetus. We no longer take Nature to be the relic of the work God wrought at the dawn of creation in some far-off, primeval time. We cannot now look on it as on the temples of Greece or the Egyptian pyramids, ruined remains of the art and energy of a dim and distant past, silent records of thoughts and purposes that had their place in brains long since turned to dust. Nature is full of God. The great Gardener is always moving about among His plants, fostering and tending them. Nay, He is their very life, more essential to their being than the sap that nourishes their growth. We have learnt to understand better St. Paul's noble conception that "in Him we live and move and have our being," so that "He is not far from any one of us." We say that God is as much in the world to-day as He was at the dawn of creation—if, indeed, there ever was such a dawn; for who shall deny that Origen may have been right with his brilliant suggestion that the eternal God has

been eternally creating? We affirm that God is not merely present; that He is active, as active now as He was at any supposed crisis of the past. Every day is a "day of the Lord." Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto."

Accordingly we are ceasing to be anxious to retain some scrap of the universe, some fragment of activity, where an exceptional originating energy of God may still be allowed. It has been sometimes asserted that the doctrine of *biogenesis* was essential to theism, that we must believe that life can only spring from life, and that what is called spontaneous generation, that is to say, the commencement of organic life in inorganic matter without any previous germ of life, if the naturalist discovered anything of the kind, would dispense with the need of a God in the universe; and people argued laboriously, not merely on grounds of science, but with theological bias, that life could only come from life. Thus they would reserve the origin of life to God's creative action. But if it is so reserved why should we deny that creative energy might as well be exercised to-day as it was at some previous age of the history of the universe? And is it not a very poor province to defend for God, as though He had been edged by science out of every other part of His dominions, till this small, remote,

reserve territory were all we could now venture to claim for Him? But now the doctrine of the Divine immanence brings back the thought of the presence of God in all the activity of nature. It helps us to see in evolution the process by which God works out His own idea for the development of the universe. It has no fear of the uniformity of law. With Kingsley, it regards the laws of nature as the ways of God. These laws are uniform—that is only another way of saying that God is constant. The uniformity of nature is the expression of the constancy of God. It is the consequence and proclamation of the truth the Psalmists delighted in when they glorified His name as that of a "faithful" God.

With this view of the immanence of God in nature no discoveries in science can in the least disturb our faith. For "if," as Professor Fraser says, "natural causation is all ultimately supernatural, no increase in our physical science of the special causes in the visible succession can dissolve the spiritual significance that is immanent in each caused cause and in the whole."*

2. Considerations such as these concerning the relation of God to nature cannot fail to affect our ideas of Providence. Under the old scheme of the

* *Philosophy of Theism.* First Series, page 241.

Divine transcendence Providence was recognised, not only in a general supervision of the universe, but more particularly in special interferences at great emergencies. It was as when a thread broke in the loom and the weaver inserted his finger to join it again. Such an anthropomorphic conception implied a poor notion of the mechanism of nature, and by acknowledging the presence and action of God as occasional it tacitly denied His full, continuous concern with what was going on in His universe, excepting in so far as He was supposed to be perpetually watching it from the outside. But the Divine immanence implies the perpetuity and universality of Providence. It denies the distinction between special and general Providence by asserting that all Providence is both special and general—special as it has regard to every individual, general as this is in accordance with a universal system of government. With the old view, if a flash of lightning suddenly revealed a chasm at the traveller's feet into which the next step in the dark would have plunged him, there was a "Special Providence"; the new view implies that this only differs from other acts of a preserving and helping love continued in an unbroken series from the cradle to the grave by revealing its character in a marked and startling form. Under the old theory God

had His favourites who were saved by hairbreadth escapes, in accidents that were fatal to persons who were not the objects of "Special Providences": this was supposed to account for the fact that one man in particular found that somebody else had taken the last berth in the ship he had meant to sail by, and so escaped the fate of the crew and passengers when it went down with all on board—no "Special Providence" saving them. It looks like a reflection of the Pagan mythological tales about heroes rescued by the timely interference of gods and goddesses in battles where thousands of common mortals perish unheeded. It is the aristocratic idea of privilege carried up to religion. The newer view is more democratic, and it seems to agree better with our Lord's assurance that not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father's notice, that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

3. Then this idea of the immanence of God in nature must also affect our conception of miracles. To-day the question is not so much as to whether miracles happened. We are driven back to a prior question—What is a miracle? The crude notion that it is a breach of the laws of nature long since gave place to the thought of it as special Divine action aside from or superseding those laws. In one respect it is like the "Special Providence." It is the

action of the Master of the great machine interfering with its working for some definite purpose. We are told that He would not be the Master, would not be a free Agent, if He could not do this. But it all goes on the assumption of the mechanical construction of the universe and the Creator standing outside it to watch its independent movement. When we accept the idea of the Divine immanence the position is changed. If God is always working in nature through its normal operations He cannot be regarded as stepping in or interfering when anything happens apart from the normal. If everything in nature is full of God He cannot be more in the miracle than He is in nature. Therefore the miracle cannot now be taken as an instance of God's presence and power over and above what is considered to be non-miraculous. God is no more concerned with the loaves and fishes given to the multitude by Jesus on the Galilean hill than with the corn that grows on the plain or the fish that swarm in the sea, not because the wonderful feeding in the wilderness is not from Him, but because the daily feeding in the home is equally His work. What then are we to regard as a miracle? The mistake of the past was to look at this question in the abstract, on the assumption that there was one particular order of events, marked off from every-

thing else that happened, to which the specific name "miracle" could be given. The newer critical method drives us back to the definite instances of recorded events to which this title "miracle" has been commonly attached. In doing so it compels us to question the assumption and to ask whether all these events can be comprehended in the same category. It is to be observed that the New Testament has no one name for miracle, using the three terms "wonder," "power," "sign"—none of them in itself technical; while in the Old Testament there is no sharp distinction between what is natural and what is miraculous. Both are there treated as equally of God. It is sometimes said that a miracle is the operation of a higher law interfering with a lower, or the introduction of a new, unknown force which may have its own laws, although they are at present beyond our understanding. Accordingly, Professor Fraser asks, "Is not 'miracle,' when the term is applied to any physical event, *e.g.*, the resurrection of a dead man, a relative term, dependent on the limitations of human experience and human intellectual grasp; so that in proportion as intelligence and experience are widened, events called supernatural and miraculous would be seen by the eye of reason to take their places in the perfect order of the Divine intellectual system, but still at

a point of view transcending that of the reason that is latent in experience in which a human being can consciously participate?" As showing that this idea is not entirely new, he adds a little later: "I suppose that a dim idea of this sort may have been in Bishop Butler's mind, when he suggested that there can be no 'absurdity in supposing that there may be beings in the universe whose capacities and knowledge may be so extensive as that the whole Christian dispensation [commonly called supernatural or miraculous] may to them appear natural—natural as the visible course of things appears to us.'"*

4. Then, further, the idea of inspiration must be greatly modified by this thought of the Divine immanence. A hundred years ago it was customary to take it absolutely as representing the direct voice of God at certain rare crises of the world's history, and especially when He was giving a new revelation from heaven. But now if He is present in the soul as well as in nature He must be always speaking to His children. It is true He may be regarded as a silent God, close to us, but not uttering His voice. That, however, is when we take a formal, external view of God's voice, as though He only spoke in tones audible to the bodily ear. In point of fact He

* *Philosophy of Theism.* First Series, pages 30, 31.

is speaking by all He is doing, revealing Himself by all His actions; and then all good and wise thoughts are to be attributed to His presence in the minds of His children. This is not to deny the inspiration of the writers of the Bible nor its unparalleled depth and sweep of truth; but it forbids a hard uniform treatment of the subject. Here, as in the case of miracles, it is not possible to have one comprehensive definition covering all instances; we are invited in the inductive method to inquire for the source and power of each great utterance as it arises. Thus we are prepared to recognise different degrees and also different kinds of inspiration according as the fullness of the presence of God is more or less experienced, or its effects variously operative.

5. Lastly, this idea of the Divine immanence has its bearings on the life of faith in the devout soul. In the region of personal religion it has brought about a return to what is sometimes called the "Pauline mysticism." The hard, forensic theology is dying away and a theology of life taking its place. In place of St. Paul's rabbinical methods of argument illustrated by the earlier chapters of the Epistle to the Romans we are turning to his spiritual methods in the eighth chapter of that book and in the epistles of the captivity, while the richness of the Johannine thought is more appreciated. "The

Living Christ" and "The Indwelling Christ" are phrases now often on our lips. There is a revival of interest in the old mystics. Tauler has been recovered; the *Theologia Germanica* translated as a book of popular devotion; the *Imitatio Christi* set next to the Bible among people who are attached to the most diverse religious denominations; and the deepest spiritual religion of the age intensely influenced by the consciousness of the immediate presence of God in the soul.

VII.

THE DECLINE OF CALVINISM.

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A HUNDRED years ago Calvinism was the most potent type of religion in Great Britain. North of the Tweed it held sway universally with stern and unmitigated severity. In England it had never obtained such unrivalled supremacy. The High Church party had repudiated it from the first; the more lax majority of the Established Church were accused of neglecting doctrinal theology for what the Evangelicals called "mere morality"; and the newly-risen vigorous Evangelical party was itself divided on this question, the Methodists, influenced by John Wesley's pronounced opposition to Calvinism, advocating Arminianism, and, like the Quakers of a former age, remonstrating against what they regarded as the ungracious tenets of the Geneva theology. Still, the Evangelicals of the Church of England were nearly all Calvinists; so were most of the Nonconformists, in particular the great bodies of the Baptists and Congregationalists.

And, now, what do we see? In Scotland, its ancient stronghold, a tremendous onslaught has been

made against the system; and, though it has shown too much vigour entirely to succumb, it has reeled beneath the blows rained upon it. Bruised, battered, humbled, robbed of its old masterhood, it is compelled to stand on the defensive, even among the sons of the Covenanters. In England the Evangelicals of the Established Church, a shrunken and enfeebled party, have become too moluscous in their theology to count as the champions of any system, while the Nonconformists have largely abandoned Calvinism, the Congregationalists almost entirely, the Baptists still clinging to some remnants of the system under the spell of Mr. Spurgeon's eloquence.

The disintegration of the granite mountain has been a gradual process. Even at the commencement of the century there were signs that it was approaching. Already the Westminster Confession was no longer pushed to its extreme limits; and there was growing up what came to be known as "Moderate Calvinism." But "Moderate Calvinism" is logically as impossible as partial necessity or relative absoluteness. To the credit of the merciless intellect of its great founder, it must be recognised that the original system was so perfectly fitted together as an organic unity that no part of it could be removed or changed without vitally affecting the whole structure. "Moderate Calvinism" has never been able

to furnish itself with an adequate defence. Therefore the very appearance of it was a sign that the disintegrating process which must ultimately bring the whole pile to the ground was already at work upon it. You must either be a Calvinist or not a Calvinist; there is no neutral territory. And if you would be an honest, consistent Calvinist you should not pick and choose between the tenets of your system or water down those that appear to be too harsh. Nevertheless, that this process was going on cannot be denied by anybody who will take the troble to compare the writings of leading theologians at the beginning of the nineteeth century with the works of Calvin himself and his Puritan followers. Read, for example, the Lectures of Dr. Payne, of Exeter, published in the year 1836, after being delivered to students for the ministry during the earlier decades of the century, on "Divine Sovereignty," "Election," "The Atonement," "Justification," and "Regeneration." These lectures represent a genuine Calvinistic scheme of thought. The author first vindicates the Divine sovereignty, and then the doctrine of election as applied to individual souls based on the former principle. But he argues that election does not involve reprobation. More consistently, if less mercifully, Calvin had said that it did. Here is one

of the changes brought about by "Moderate Calvinism." The heart's gains are at the expense of the intellect. A second point on which the extreme position of the older Calvinism was attacked concerned the extent of the Atonement. Dr. Payne argued for the limited application of the Atonement, maintaining with the old Calvinists that "Few things can be more certain than that what an Almighty Saviour undertakes He must accomplish; in other words, that if Christ dies with the intention of rendering the Atonement the means of salvation to all men, all men must be saved."*

Since the doctrine of election implies that all men are not to be saved, it follows, according to this logic, that the redeeming efficacy of the work of Christ is correspondingly limited. At the same time, Dr. Payne endeavours to guard his doctrine against "Ultra-Calvinism" by distinguishing between what he calls the "sufficiency" and the "efficiency" of the Atonement. God did not determine to inflict punishment on some and to pardon others, but to provide a sacrifice of infinite worth, by which every obstacle to the bestowment of mercy might be removed; and then, as a moral Governor, to offer pardon to all who chose to accept it. Thus, the Atonement is in itself *sufficient* for all. But

* Page 223.

then, acting as a sovereign, God only bestows the grace by which the disposition to accept this offer is aroused on whomsoever He chooses, that is on the limited number of the elect. Thus, its *efficiency* is circumscribed by predestination. This fine distinction marks a further departure from the rigour of Calvinism. Similarly, if we compare Wardlaw or Chalmers with Calvin, or even Owen, it will be seen that a great softening of the grim, uncompromising theology of the original scheme has taken place. The "Declaration of Faith and Order" in the *Congregational Year Book*, now ignominiously relegated to an appendix, may be taken as a specimen of very moderate Calvinism. The doctrine of election is there just sufficiently asserted to exclude Arminianism; but then this doctrine is so softened down, and treated in so vague a style, as to make it appear as little offensive as possible. You may be pretty sure that when a half-hearted, deprecatory tone is adopted the cause advocated is in a bad way: it will not be long before it is given up altogether.

But now, while these things show that the disintegrating process was early at work, the very conditions revealed even in the milder principles are so remote from all our ways of thinking to-day that we must confess the change brought about by the

Moderate Calvinists was as nothing compared to that which has followed, leaving their positions, once thought to be very advanced, now far in the background and scarcely distinguishable from those which they had abandoned. Dr. Payne, Dr. Wardlaw, even Dr. Chalmers, read to us like old-world theologians when they touch on the specific Calvinistic tenets. Thus Dr. Payne, after beginning with the Divine sovereignty, proceeds to devote six lectures of his not very bulky volume to the doctrine of election. Can we imagine any influential theological writer proceeding on these lines to-day? In point of fact, we have ceased to be interested in the doctrine of election at all. It is no longer within the region of living questions; the fierce fires of controversy that once raged about it are reduced to grey ashes. So far have we moved that thinkers of liberal tendency have given up the polemical method in dealing with this subject as no longer needed, and have turned to the cool, impartial, historical method. Calvinism, that was fought during the first half of the century as though it were some fierce dragon with a terrible abundance of life in it, is now as quietly studied as if it had no more power to hurt than the fossil skeleton of an antediluvian dinosaur. Nay, we go further in the present day. We are prepared to be magnanimous with the old

system, and even to repent of the uncompromising antagonism that was developed in the heat of battle. We are learning to admire the excellencies of Calvinism, to give honour to the sturdy Puritan theology, to regret the loss of its virile energy, to urge on an easy-going religious public the necessity of returning to its strength of conviction and thoroughness of principle. But the admiration thus felt is at the very antipodes to any inclination towards a return to the actual beliefs that were most characteristically Calvinistic. It is in part an effect of the enthusiastic literary and historical appreciation of the subject in writers such as Renan and Carlyle; in deeper regions of thought it follows a perception that Calvinism had a real vocation to fulfil and a great message to deliver in its insistence on the supremacy of God. And yet this is only because it is regarded from without, at a safe distance, without a chance of recovering its old despotic power.

It is not easy to point out all the influences that have combined to induce this decline of Calvinism. The very spirit of the times has been against it. It could no more flourish in the atmosphere of the nineteenth century than the arctic flora on the sunny side of the Alps. Perhaps some enfeebling of moral fibre may have facilitated the growth of a

deep aversion from this system of stern and terrible beliefs in an age that has welcomed the discovery of chloroform as one of its greatest boons, and that evinces an ever-increasing sensitiveness to suffering. But it would not be just to say that the only or the chief explanation was to be found in a softening of the moral tissues. This revolt has been led by the most high-minded thinkers of the age. It sprang in a large degree from the new humanitarian temper. While prostrating itself before the awful Majesty of God, Calvinism had no pity for man. The elect were to be grateful for their favours, but the rest of the world might perish like flies in autumn. The new age refuses to treat the fate of the greater part of the human race in that callous style. If it were convinced of the correctness of the Calvinistic interpretation of the universe and its destiny it would not bow down before the Supreme Being who ruled in such a heartless fashion; it would turn from Him with horror, perhaps even echo the angry protest once made by a great teacher to a leading Calvinist, "Your God is the devil." We may go back to Rousseau and the spirit of the French Revolution for the awakening of the humanitarianism that has been the growing force throughout the century. Our age can no longer permit the aristocratic Roman's contempt for the "dim plebs." Now

Calvinism is the aristocratic temper in religion; the essence of it is privilege. But the spirit of the Revolution is the death of privilege. In other words, the modern democratic temper is in direct antagonism to the underlying principles of Calvinism. It is true that the despised Calvinist could comfort himself in the midst of worldly contempt by privately reflecting on his position as a chosen favourite of the King of kings, with the pleasant assurance that some day the tables would be turned. He could comfort *himself*—that is it; but the new humanitarianism claims more than the self-comforting of the few; it calls out for the salvation of the perishing multitude. "Liberty, equality, fraternity," sound the death-knell of Calvinism as well as of feudalism.

Scotland, its stronghold, has witnessed the most serious onslaughts on Calvinism. Her greatest poet was altogether in revolt against her dominant creed. Nothing can be less Calvinistic than the prevailing sentiment of Robert Burns' lyrics, which breathe a spirit of large humanity, charity for the erring, sympathy for the suffering, kindly interest in all natural affection—how far is all this from the gloom of the old theology! Burns is so kindly that he cannot even think of the Spirit of Evil without a touch of pity for his fate,

so that in concluding his "Address to the De'il" he says:

> But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
> Oh, wad ye tak' a thought an' men'!
> Ye aiblins might, I dinna ken,
> Still hae a stake;
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Ev'n for your sake!

"Ye aiblins might"—there we are carried leagues away from the root-ideas of Calvinism. Most of us will not venture an opinion on the prospects of the Prince of Evil. But what are we to say of the possibilities before the human race? What about the infants who were once supposed to be doomed to everlasting perdition because they were not of the elect? Theologians in Scotland will not be very ready to welcome the unhappy poet into their fraternity, but they will not deny the immense popularity of his lyrics among their fellow-countrymen, and such poetry as this of Robert Burns cannot have been without great influence on the thoughts of the people.

It is a noteworthy fact that the first attacks on Calvinism in Scotland came from the laity. The ministry was still too completely under the enthralment of the Shorter Catechism to venture outside its prescribed limits; but courageous thinkers, less hampered by professional prejudices, made the bold

plunge. First and foremost among the deliberate antagonists of the Calvinistic positions in Scotland is Thomas Erskine of Linlathen. Trained as a lawyer, but early retiring from practice, Erskine became the most stimulating theological thinker that Scotland has produced in the century. In 1820 he published a work on the internal evidence for the truth of revelation, which prepared for a departure from the Calvinistic standpoint by reasoning for the essential adaptation of Christianity to human nature, while with Calvinism it was entirely opposed to the instincts of human nature, since that was held to be totally depraved. Eight years later appeared his work on *The Unconditional Freeness of the Gospel*, and in 1837 that on *The Doctrine of Election and its Connection with the General Theory of Christianity*. In these books and his other writings, especially his letters, Erskine broke the spell of Calvinism, and started lines of thought that led to a wholly different way of regarding the Gospel. It is enough to say here that he entirely repudiated the hard, exclusive temper of the dominant theology, lifting the subject into a higher plane by dwelling on the spiritual nature of redemption as a restoration to God and the true life of the soul, rather than mere deliverance from punishment.

Thomas Erskine's influence is to be recognised very clearly in Macleod Campbell. In the year 1831 this truly saintly man was excluded from the ministry of the Church of Scotland, by the action of the General Assembly, for preaching the unlimited Atonement of Christ. This must not be mistaken for "Universalism," the doctrine of universal restoration; it means that atonement is made for the sins of all mankind, and that, consequently, its blessings are to be freely preached on the ground of God's love to all. In his great book on *The Nature of the Atonement*, Macleod Campbell indicated four points with respect to which Calvinism had been recently modified.* The first of them goes to the root of the matter. It is "as to the reference of the Atonement," which is held to have been for all men, and not for the elect only. Campbell points out the inconsistency of this position with the purely rectoral idea of the subject. Owen and the stricter Calvinists were right in arguing that an Atonement of this kind must be limited if all were not to share in it; otherwise Christ would have paid the penalty of the sins of the lost, who, nevertheless, are still called upon to pay them, which would involve the injustice of exacting the debt twice over. Campbell meets the case by rejecting this conception of the

* Chapter iv.

Atonement, and formulating such a theory of it as shall be consistent with its unlimited scope, although only those people benefit by it who yield to the appeals of the Gospel.

In these profound spiritual studies of Macleod Campbell we see the subject approached chiefly from what we may call the Divine standpoint. It is not at all the new humanitarianism which some people decry as sentimental and lacking in moral fibre; it is a calm, profound consideration of the character of God as the Father whose name is Love that determines Macleod Campbell's attitude to the question of God's relations with man. This way of viewing the greatest problems of theology from the point of view of the character of God is seen in Maurice, Robertson, Baldwin Brown, and other leaders of the wider teaching in England. Thus it has come about that the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God has been made central to the theology of the latter part of the nineteenth century, in place of the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, which was the dominating factor of Calvinism.

It is very easy to misrepresent this doctrine, so as to make it seem a lowering, instead of being an exaltation, of our conception of the Divine. That has been done by some of its advocates who have dwelt exclusively on the kindly aspects of paternity,

perhaps treating them in a feeble, sentimental way. By so doing, these people have laid themselves open to the retort that they are ignoring the rectoral relations of God to the universe as its Supreme Ruler. But when the answer is thrown into the customary form of a statement that God is not only a Father but also a King, it shows fundamentally the same misconception of the Divine Fatherhood as that of the sentimentalists it is opposing. Such teachers as Macleod Campbell and Maurice give no excuse for that retort. With them the idea of the Divine Fatherhood is as far as possible from the notion of a mild, amiable paterfamilias, indulgent to the faults and foibles of his pampered family. They do not conceive of God after the pattern of an Eli. The ideal Fatherhood involves the government of His family by God on the highest principles of righteousness, chastising the unruly with all wholesome indignation against their evil deeds. He would be no true father that neglected this most painful, but most necessary, part of his functions. The perfect father is one who understands how to keep his own house in order. Therefore, it is only from an imperfect, narrow, unworthy conception of the notion of fatherhood that anybody can suppose it necessary to add that if God is a Father He is *also* a King. It would be more just to assert that,

since He is a Father, therefore He is a King, because the father is sovereign ruler within his own family even more than he could be over any other conceivable realm beyond its borders. The old method was to subordinate the Fatherhood to the Sovereignty; the modified statement places the Fatherhood side by side with the Sovereignty; while the teaching of the school of Macleod Campbell and Maurice takes so large and lofty a view of the Fatherhood as to include in it as one of its essential characteristics the notion of Sovereignty.

The change thus brought about means that, while with the Calvinist the Fatherhood of God was confined to the elect, and even with them only as the result of adoption, in the newer way of regarding the subject the Divine Fatherhood is universal and according to nature. Thus it involves a relationship that is essential, inalienable, eternal; so that God is the Father of the prodigal son as well as of his elder brother, and his Father even while he is "wasting his substance in riotous living," as really as after he has "come to himself." It embraces the whole human world in the family that has God for its Father, although it recognises with sorrow that this great family of mankind contains many unworthy sons and daughters. It teaches that God "hateth nothing that He has made," and that He ever loves

all His children with an infinite and everlasting love. It holds that He punishes the sinful with wholesome discipline, but that He is ceaselessly seeking their restoration. Then it represents the mission of Jesus Christ and His great redeeming work as springing out of the Fatherly love in the heart of God, who yearns to have His lost children restored to their true home.

Ideas such as these must be fatal to the whole Calvinistic conception of God and man, and their mutual relations. They lead us to repudiate with horror as a libel on the character of God any such notion of His sovereignty as that it is independent of morality, representing Him as a sort of Sultan acting with pure caprice in choosing one for everlasting bliss, and relegating another to everlasting torment, on the Turk's plea that he "has a right to do as he will with his own." Instead of disregarding the Divine justice, as those who perversely misapprehend it assert, this teaching exalts that sublime attribute by showing that it means more than the sure fitting of penalty to crime, that it involves fairness and equity, qualities, to say the least, much obscured in the Calvinistic system. While Calvinism approached religion from the point of view of God's rights, the newer teaching comes to it from the side of His character, abandoning the

purely political ground for a more ethical position. Thus it recognises the universal love of God as the central element of His character revealed to us in Jesus Christ, and His Fatherhood as the very highest conception of His nature that it is possible to attain.

VIII.

CHANGED VIEWS OF REDEMPTION.

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The many great changes that have come over religious thought during the century could not but affect our conceptions of the central fact of redemption. The decay of Calvinism, the enlarged perception of the Divine Fatherhood, and the deeper ethical colour that has been infused into our thoughts of God and His relations to us have combined to give an entirely new aspect to the work of Christ in the salvation of the world. Until recently it was customary to regard this mainly under the form of a legal transaction. God was the Judge in a law court; Christ was the Advocate on behalf of the accused; the Atonement was a procedure by means of which the guilty were acquitted, while the claims of retributive justice were fully satisfied. This mode of viewing the subject may be traced back to Biblical imagery, having its origin partly in the fact that Christianity itself was based on Judaism, essentially a religion of law; and partly in the rabbinical language of St. Paul, a trained lawyer, accustomed to the legal

aspect of religion. But a further impulse in this direction was given by the reformers, who neglected the mystical element in St. Paul and the Johannine theology, even put our Lord's teaching in a second place as not containing the fulness of truth afterwards revealed to the Apostles, and threw the whole Christian scheme into a forensic form, according to a literal interpretation of Pauline phraseology. With respect to the Atonement, the Protestant Schoolmen of the sixteenth century abandoned Anselm's view of a satisfaction of the sovereign rights of God in favour of the notion of a satisfaction of the claims of law and abstract justice, and considerations for the good government of the universe, which must not be endangered by too ready a condonement of the sins of mankind. We rarely hear discussions on redemption in the present day turning on points such as these. The Atonement is now regarded more as the personal reconciliation of God's disobedient children with their Father in heaven, and its process and results are considered in a more personal way and with more regard to ethical issues. These changes may be traced out in particular with regard to two branches of the subject—first with reference to the end and object of redemption; and, secondly, in regard to the method and process

of atonement by means of which that redemption is effected.

First, let us consider the changed views of the great purpose of redemption and the supreme object that it effects. The question is, From what did Christ come to redeem the world, and what supreme good did He thereby accomplish for the benefit of mankind? In a general way it is admitted on all hands that since sin was the undoing of the race, it is from sin that Christ came to redeem it. But when we ask more particularly, What kind of deliverance from sin is meant? the paths diverge, and the answers differ. A hundred years ago the thought that bulked most largely in theological treatises and popular sermons on the subject was that of escape from the penalty of sin. This idea runs through Dr. Payne's lectures in his exposition of "Moderate Calvinism" quite as prominently as through the works of the older divines. Thus in his tenth lecture, where he discusses the necessity of the Atonement, he considers it throughout as a question of a criminal's escape from the just punishment of his offences. It is the same with Magee, with Chalmers, with Wardlaw—in fact, with all writers on the subject at this earlier time. Dr. Pye-Smith, in his four *Discourses on Sacrifice and the Priesthood of Christ*, dwells more on the inherent evil

of sin itself; but he, too, emphasizes the penalty of sin, the punishment, writing of "SIN and its penal consequence WRATH, that is, the punishment of sin determined, not by arbitrary dominion, but by the incorruptible and unerring justice of God." He refers to the ceremonial ordinances of the Mosaic system constituting "a perpetual memorial of sin as involving exposure to punishment."*

By degrees it came to be felt that a higher conception of the Atonement was possible. It was not denied that sin deserved punishment, nor that this punishment was in itself most terrible to contemplate; but the idea grew on those who were considering the question most earnestly that it was unworthy of redemption to be supremely concerned with the idea of escaping penalties; and devout souls perceived that sin itself was the real evil from which deliverance was needed, and that so long as the sin lasted the punishment was not only necessary and just, but really what was most for the ultimate good of the offender. While it was admitted that Christ would bring deliverance from the worst consequences of wrong conduct, it came to be recognised that those worst consequences consist in the moral degradation following on evil deeds, which is in itself a more dreadful evil than mere suffering.

* See *Discourse III.*

Thus, in his great book on the Atonement, McLeod Campbell turns our attention from the consequences of sin to sin itself, or if treating of those consequences he dwells more on the separation from God that it involves than on pains and penalties. Maurice's writings contain many vehement protests against the lower, more cowardly, more selfish conceptions of redemption; so do Robertson's Sermons. Perhaps we should look in quite another direction for a powerful impulse towards this way of regarding the end and aim of redemption, for Newman's Sermons are remarkable for nothing more than for their power to pierce and penetrate the conscience and awaken shame and horror for the exceeding sinfulness of sin. With such ideas aroused, crude notions of the Gospel as primarily a way of escape from future suffering and a guarantee of future happiness, as essentially a certificate of exemption from infinite pain and a passport to infinite delight after death, fall to the ground because disgracefully inadequate. Of course, it is not to be supposed that any of the great teachers of religion in the earlier time confined their ideas to so low a view of the case, any more than it is to be asserted that the newer view leaves out of account the element of just retribution or the pleasing thought that Christ does indeed bring deliverance from the fatal consequences of past

misdeeds. But the centre of gravity has been shifted. Formerly this was in the idea of the punishment of sin, now it is in the idea of sin itself.

In the second place, we have to glance at the change that has come over our conceptions of the way in which our Lord has brought about His great redemption. This naturally follows the advance towards a more ethical and spiritual idea of the ends of redemption. In the earlier period the Atonement was commonly understood as a contrivance by means of which the guilty were let off their punishment on account of Christ's endurance of that to which otherwise they would be doomed. Magee —though he shocks Dr. Pye-Smith by admitting that the explanation of the Atonement is not and never can be within our reach—expressly asserts that Christ bore the punishment of our sin. But even in his time ideas on this question were already undergoing modification. Formerly it had been taught that Christ endured exactly the same amount of suffering that was due to the sinners He redeemed. This is what has been called the "commercial view of the Atonement." A precise equivalent is given as in a market transaction, and thus the debt is paid to the last farthing. It was argued that the Divine nature of the Great Sufferer gave

Him capacity for feeling infinite pain when He died on the cross for the sins of the world, so that He then endured in concentrated agony as much torment as all the souls of the redeemed together would otherwise have had to undergo through all eternity —a dreadful conception, intolerable to contemplate!

Then a modification came. It was taught that the Divine nature of Christ gave an infinite value to His sufferings, though they might not themselves have been infinite in intensity, vast and awful as they were. Still the notion of equivalence was preserved. It was still the punishment of Christ accepted by God as quite satisfying the ends of justice in lieu of the exactly equivalent punishment of the guilty persons, who are thus acquitted as though they had not committed their sin, or set free as though they had undergone their sentence, Christ having received it in their stead.

A further advance was made when it was perceived that punishment cannot exist as such when it does not attach itself to guilt; and then it was said that what Christ endured was not the punishment of our sin, but suffering which God graciously accepted in place of that punishment, as of equivalent value. All along it had been maintained, for the complete working of this arrangement, that our sin was imputed to Christ, and His righteousness imputed to

us; so that He was punished for the guilt that was thus taken on Him, while we were set free on account of the innocence of Christ reckoned as ours. But this began to wear too fictitious a character. Accordingly Dr. Payne argued that there could be no real imputation either of guilt or of righteousness, and that what really happened was that Christ was *treated* as though He had been guilty, so that we could be *treated* as though we were innocent.*

But now an entirely different conception of the whole process of the Atonement was dawning on the minds of men who were brooding over the problem. The idea of the Fatherhood of God entirely demolished the notion that He was an implacable Being who required to be appeased by the blood of His innocent Son before He would consent to forgive a guilty world. This dreadful calumny on the Divine character was not sanctioned by the great theological teachers, although their language had sometimes come dangerously near it. But undoubtedly, though unconfessed, it lurked in the background of popular conceptions of the Atonement; and some of Dr. Watts's hymns are responsible for giving it substantial support. Now, a right idea of God as He is revealed to us by Jesus Christ sweeps away the last vestige of this abominable, heathenish

* *Lectures*, page 259.

notion. The chief merit of McLeod Campbell's discussion of the Atonement may be found in his full recognition of the fact that from beginning to end it is God's work in seeking to recover His lost children; so that, in his view, instead of forgiveness only following the Atonement as its reward purchased by Christ, it precedes the Atonement, the very provision of an atonement being made by God, and thus proving that He is already forgiving His children.

Thus he writes:

> An Atonement to make God gracious, or move Him to compassion, to turn His heart towards those from whom sin had alienated His love, it would, indeed, be difficult to believe in; for if it were needed it would be impossible. To awaken to the sense of the need of such an Atonement, would certainly be to awaken to utter and certain despair. But the Scriptures do not speak of such an Atonement; for they do not represent the love of God to man as the effect, and the Atonement of Christ as the cause, but—just the contrary—they represent the love of God as the cause, and the Atonement as the effect.*

A second modification comes from the renewed interest in the Person of Jesus. Formerly, the Atonement was regarded too much as one act, valued wholly on its own account, a deed in a point of time which could be taken altogether out of its setting in the life and history of Christ. But more recently the greatly-increased interest in our Lord's life on earth has tended to connect this more closely with

* *The Nature of the Atonement*, Chapter i.

His work of redeeming the world. The consequence is that the Cross is not viewed in solitary grandeur, but taken as the completion and consummation of a life-work. Attention is no longer confined to the act of redemption; it is directed more towards the Person of the Redeemer. It is seen that it is not the Atonement, but Christ, that saves us, though He saves us by means of the Atonement. Then the place of the primary idea is shifted from the Atonement to the Incarnation; or rather, instead of approaching the Incarnation through the Atonement as though that were merely the prelude and ante-room, necessitated by, but subsidiary to, the Atonement, we learn to come to the Atonement by the way of the Incarnation, interpreting the former by means of the latter. This is the way in which McLeod Campbell treats the subject. Most recent works on the subject have given more weight to the very being of Christ on earth, His character, His whole life of obedience to the will of God and devotion to the welfare of man. Thus the "return to Christ" is seen in connection with the doctrine of redemption quite as much as in any other relation.

Meanwhile the profound mystery of the whole question has been growing on the minds of those who have given it the deepest thought. McLeod Campbell was more successful in his

criticism of former interpretations of this doctrine than in his own solution of the problem. Luminous and suggestive as are his ideas, and especially helpful as is the spirit in which he treats the subject—the atmosphere he throws over it, removing it from the limitations of the law-court and the sordid associations of the market, he does not carry so many readers with him when he proceeds to expound his own definite theory of the process of the Atonement. What Christ did for us on the cross, he teaches, was to offer repentance to God for our sins. Freed from some of the objections of older theories, this notion has been assailed for representing an unreality, since Christ, being Himself sinless, could not repent of sin.

Thus it has come about that many people have given up all attempts at explaining the mystery as hopeless. Still, with those who have done so there is by no means a general disposition to fall back on the Socinian position and deny any real atonement in the death of Christ. Maurice directed attention to the subjective side of the Atonement, the moral effect of the death of Christ on those who rightly contemplate it. This may be said to have been a dominant thought in the middle of the century. It was strongly represented by Bushnell. But more recently something deeper, more mysterious, more directly

affecting the Divine act of forgiveness has been sought after. At this point a remarkable book comes in to the relief of perplexed minds. Dr. Dale's *Lectures on the Atonement* is one of the widest read and most influential works on the subject, circulating even at the present day at the rate of a thousand copies annually. Now, in this book a sharp distinction is made between the fact of the Atonement and any theory about it. The author has his own theory, which he expounds very forcibly in the second part of his treatise, and it is one that falls back from the advance made by Campbell, viewing the question more in its legal relations. But Dr. Dale's distinction, foreshadowed in a measure by Magee at a much earlier date, has taken possession of many minds. There has come to be a feeling, among many who cling to the New Testament teaching about the fundamental fact of redemption and the association of this with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it is wholly inexplicable. This agnostic position can scarcely be hailed as in itself a mark of progress. But there is another aspect of the case that indicates a real advance. Among the older views there was a "scheme of redemption," a "plan of salvation," admired as much for its ingenuity as for the Divine mercy that prompted it. This was too suggestive of mere

cleverness. Any such notion is unworthy of the awe and majesty of the infinite God. It is all of a piece with the outworn mechanical conception of the universe as a sign of the dexterity of the great Engineer. Similarly the way in which imputed sin and imputed righteousness were set forth is suggestive of scheming ingenuity. It lacks moral breadth and a sense of reality, not to say veracity.

We have moved far from all these conceptions, far from the atmosphere in which they once throve. They no longer help us. They only puzzle and perplex us as we try to get face to face with realities. A hundred years ago an anxious inquirer was told to see his place in the scheme of salvation, which was duly explained to him with the idea that when he did see that clearly he was a saved man. Apparently the object of his faith was to be not so much Christ as the Atonement, or rather the prevalent theory of the Atonement. All that has gone. Now the inquirer is pointed to Christ, to the living Christ, who died for his sins, but who lives to save him. It is not a gain that we have become lax and indifferent where our forefathers were most anxious to grasp the exact truth. Certainly it will be no advantage, but a serious loss, for us to lose hold of the Cross on account of the clouds of mystery that have gathered about it. But it is a matter for deep

thankfulness that we have escaped from the trammels of an artificial system, and have come nearer to the conception of redemption as a vital process, in which the soul is brought into personal contact with its Saviour and reconciled to the eternal love that dwells in the heart of the Father.

IX.

THE FUTURE.

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Paley reduced Christianity to a system of Utilitarian Ethics, enforced by the sanctions of a supernatural revelation of rewards and punishments after death. More spiritual teachers could never be satisfied with this degradation of the Gospel message, and the Evangelical revival brought with it an appreciation of Divine grace in Christ and His Cross. Still, a hundred years ago, it was common to set forth hope of the ineffable bliss of Heaven, and fear of the unutterable woe of Hell, as the supreme attracting and repelling forces in religion. But by degrees it came to be perceived that too much attention to these subjects involved a selfish conception of the aims of religion. For a person to make the saving of his own soul the supreme end of his devotion was seen to be unworthy of one called to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, whose whole life was a sacrifice of self for the saving of others. A recognition of the truth that sin is itself a greater evil than its punishment shifted the point of view from which the whole subject was approached, and people came

to perceive that the Gospel was more concerned with the restoration of degraded souls to their status of Divine sonship in a regeneration of life and character, than with an escape from pains and penalties. Further, the break-up of the old dogmatism under the solvent of critical thought raised the question whether we really know so much about the infinite future as the older preaching had assumed. At the same time a wholesome return to social duties and present-day interests made of religion an inspiration for life rather than a preparation for death. Thus from various causes it has come about that the whole question of futurity, and especially the conception of future punishment, have receded from the prominent position they formerly held in the thought and teaching of the Church.

When we turn to the ideas now maintained on this subject we encounter vital changes. At the beginning of the century the doctrine of everlasting punishment, without hope of escape for any who died in a state of impenitence, was all but universally held. It was fully expounded and defended in Pye Smith's *First Lines of Theology*.* The horrors it involves were enlarged on in popular preaching with tremendous descriptions of "The Great Assize," and lurid pictures of the torments of the lost. With such

* See Book iv., Chapter 4.

ideas it was only right and reasonable for the chief aim of preachers to be to "snatch the brand from the burning" before it was too late. The matter of surprise is that any other topic was ever on their lips, or that they could ever preach without giving the most alarming warnings and spending themselves in agonies of entreaties.

Now, it was inevitable that the views of the nature and character of God taught by such men as Erskine and McLeod Campbell should have produced marked effects on men's ideas of His treatment of the great multitude of the human race, whom the harsher theology had consigned to everlasting perdition. But it is a curious fact that public attention was roused in regard to this subject by a man who had approached it from the opposite point of view to that of the current popular theology. Maurice had been brought up as a Unitarian, and he relates in his correspondence how he became dissatisfied with the thin universalism in which he had been trained, according to which the love of God appeared to be a condition of easy good-nature. His own specific views were the result of his movement from this earlier position to one involving graver conceptions of sin and its consequent alienation from God, based on more profound ideas of the moral nature of God. Maurice's views are expounded in his *Theological*

Essays, published in the year 1853, his sermons and lectures, and the correspondence published with his *Life*. He denied that the Bible contains any re velation of everlasting punishment. The word "eternal" he took to have a meaning altogether apart from time, indicating that which belongs to God and the spiritual world. A favourite text which he employed as his key for interpreting the New Testament teachings about Eternal Life was John xvii. 3: "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." Maurice took these words to be a definition of eternal life as itself consisting in the knowledge of God and Christ.

Maurice's writings on this subject were fiercely assailed in a newspaper controversy, and they became the subject of discussion between their author and Dr. Jelf, the Principal of King's College, London, where he was theological professor. The dispute was brought before the College council; and though Mr. Gladstone, as one of the members of that council, moved that it should be referred to theological experts for their opinion, this wise and just proposal was set aside, and Maurice was required to resign by a resolution passed on October 27, 1853. Dr. Jelf interpreted the resolu-

tion as a mandate for the immediate cessation of Maurice's lectures, not even permitting him to complete the session and draw the year's work to a conclusion, an action that led the dismissed professor to feel himself "treated as a leper." Maurice had made the professorship; his genius and character had drawn the continually growing classes together; he was far and away the greatest teacher at King's College. Yet he was dismissed solely on the ground of his refusal to affirm the doctrine of everlasting punishment. This fact will show what was the state of opinion on the subject as recently as the middle of the century. Such an action would be impossible to-day, almost as certainly as the condemnation of Galileo—so far have we moved in so short a time.

It is plain from Maurice's correspondence that he had been much misrepresented, or, at least, much misunderstood, for it was said that he taught the universal restoration of wicked, impenitent men. But he was careful to show that he taught nothing of the kind, holding that God had made no revelation concerning final destiny. His special view of the word "eternal" excluded such a pronouncement. What he did in this direction was negative, to deny that the dogma of everlasting punishment was part of the Christian revelation, and to refuse to put any

limits to the mercy of God. But his chief aim was positive—to raise the idea of eternal life from the notion of mere endless continuance of being and expound its spiritual character, how it consists in the knowledge of God and Christ.*

In his work on *The Second Death and the Restitution of All Things*, Mr. Andrew Jukes argued that universal restoration was positively taught in Scripture. The same view was maintained by Mr. Dobney, of Maidstone, and by Dr. Samuel Cox, who went so far in his book entitled *Salvator Mundi* as to say, in reference to the great parable of judgment in *Matthew*, "that to the Eastern shepherd his goats are well-nigh, if not quite, as dear as his sheep; and that the left hand of a judge or ruler is the next best place to his right hand."† This may well be called special pleading. Most people decline to take up a dogmatic position on either side of the question. But there has come about a very general repudiation of the old dogmatic attitude, many going as far as Tennyson in *In Memorium* to

> faintly trust the larger hope,

who could not venture on a positive belief in a future complete restoration, and more shrinking with

* *e.g.*, See his letter to Julius Hare. *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. ii., pages 182 *ff.*

† *Salvator Mundi*, page 137.

horror from the dogmatic assertion of everlasting punishment without chance of escape, such as is expressed by the awful words Dante saw over the gate of Hell: "Forsake all hope, ye that enter here."

Preaching to crowded congregations in Westminster Abbey in the year 1878, Dean (then Canon) Farrar startled his hearers by roundly asserting that the word "Hell," as understood in English, was not to be found in the Bible. With all the wealth of his well-known eloquence the preacher denounced the old doctrine as impossible of belief and utterly unworthy of the God revealed to us in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The discourses roused the keenest interest, and produced a widespread effect on popular conceptions of future punishment.

Meanwhile, an attack on the doctrine of everlasting punishment was being advanced from another position, and another alternative to that of restoration put forward. This is known by its opponents as the "Annihilation" theory, but as stated by its exponents it is the doctrine of "Life in Christ." A neutral title is "Conditional Immortality." The idea itself was not novel, since it had been held by some of the ancient Jews, and also by some of the early Christian Fathers—Arnobius, for instance. John Locke advocated it; Dr. Watts, the famous hymn-writer, adopted it in his work on *The Ruin and*

Recovery of Mankind; and later, John Foster, the essayist. In modern times it was revived and worked out with great thoroughness and acumen by Edward White, with whose name it has come to be especially associated. In the year 1846 Mr. White published a volume setting forth the doctrine of "Immortality through the Incarnation." In the year 1875 there appeared a more elaborate exposition of the same views in his work entitled *Life in Christ*. Mr. White warns his readers not to anticipate a treatise exclusively or chiefly on Future Punishment, but rather a discussion of the "source and conditions of human immortality." He begins by arguing on grounds of science against the doctrine of natural immortality, showing how man shares the natural life of the animal world, of which death is the natural termination. Then he proceeds to point out that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is not Scriptural, that it is not found either in the Old Testament or in the New. He maintains that the Scriptures describe immortality as a supernatural gift bestowed through Jesus Christ. Further, he shows with abundance of evidence that the punishment of sin in Scripture is nearly always described as "death" and "destruction" rather than as pain and torment, and the blessing of salvation as "life" rather than as happiness. Thus the doom of the

lost is not everlasting torment, but extinction of being, a fate that comes about simply by leaving the guilty soul to the course of nature. The offer of forgiveness and salvation in the Gospel through the redemption wrought by Jesus Christ is to rescue from this fate by bringing the life that survives death and continues to eternity. So far the system is clear and simple; but Mr. White complicated it by adding that the souls of the lost would be supernaturally preserved for a time in order that they might be brought up for judgment, and only extinguished after that great event.

These views were received with indignant protests, and their genial author ostracised as a heretic. The attack came from two sides. The orthodox party denounced them for their repudiation of the dogma of everlasting punishment, and Dr. Liddon preached against them in St. Paul's Cathedral on this ground. From another point of view they were attacked because they denied the natural immortality of the soul, and introduced what was thought by some to be an even more awful fate than everlasting torment in the prospect of total extinction of being. This position was maintained with great vehemence by Baldwin Brown in his lectures on *Conditional Immortality*.*

* By an unfortunate mistake Dr. Fisher says that the doctrine

Nevertheless, Edward White's ideas grew in influence. Dr. Dale of Birmingham preached and wrote in support of the doctrine of conditional immortality, and an important work expounding the same views was put forth by Dr. Emmanuel Petavel of Geneva, their leading advocate on the Continent. Gradually it was perceived that although the rigour of Edward White's position might not be maintained, it had at bottom a sound exegesis, in that destruction, in some form, rather than torment, is the Scriptural fate of sin, and eternal life, not simply perfect happiness, the supreme gift of the Gospel. But it was pointed out that this might be the case and yet hope might be cherished for the final restoration of the lost. Mr. White had himself allowed of a continuous of existence for a time after death, even in the case of the lost. It was possible to hold that during that interval "the spirits in prison" might be having the Gospel preached to them, and Mr. White admitted that those who had not had an opportunity of hearing the Gospel during their life on earth—that is to say the majority of the human race, the great multitude of the heathen world—might then get their probation. If the process of destruction were gradual it would not be

of conditional immortality "has been advocated with ability in the writings of James Baldwin Brown." (*History of Christian Doctrine*, page 479.) The very opposite is the case.

requisite to set any limit to the possibilities of recovery before it was complete and the last spark of conscious being extinguished. In this way some have come to combine the doctrine of "conditional immortality" with that of the "larger hope." But, of course, this means a departure from the strictly scientific ground of the earlier part of Edward White's treatise, because it is not maintained that the extinction of consciousness in the lower animals is a process of time following physiological death.

It may be said generally that there has been a softening of the asperity of controversy on this most mysterious topic, and a growing willingness to admit a variety of views. It was not a triumph for the formal doctrine of conditional immortality, but it was a sign of liberality of sentiment, as well as a proof of the recognition of Edward White's great merits as a minister of Jesus Christ, that he was made Chairman of the Congregational Union for the year 1886.

We shall never return to the harshness and horror of the old position. Even those who feel constrained to adhere to a conviction of the hopeless condition of the lost and their everlasting continuance in the region of darkness abandon the Dantesque realisation of it. In the dome of the

Cathedral at Florence there is a representation of the torments of hell, where demons are seen tearing the flesh of the damned with pincers, and boring into their bodies with red-hot irons, while just above them the saints sit complacently oblivious of these tortures, if not deriving actual satisfaction from the contemplation of them. We have outgrown that. If we could believe in such scenes they would cast an eternal gloom over the supposed joys of heaven. Mr. Spurgeon maintained that he did not change his opinions during the whole course of his ministry; but let anybody compare the blood-curdling pictures of future torment in his early sermons with his grave and earnest warnings of the more recent issues of *The Metropolitan Pulpit*, and he will observe a marked change, at least in the way of expressing them. Take, for instance, the following extract from a sermon preached in 1855:—

> Only conceive that poor wretch in the flame, who is saying, "Oh, for one drop of water to cool my parched tongue!" See how his tongue hangs from his blistered lips! How it excoriates and burns the roof of his mouth as if it were a firebrand! Behold him crying for a drop of water! I will not picture the scene [but he is picturing it]. Suffice it for me to close up by saying that the hell of hells will be to thee, poor sinner, the thought that it is to be for ever and ever. Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God, and on it shall be written, "For ever!" When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torments, they shall say, "For ever!" When they howl, echo cries, "For ever!"

"'For ever' is written on their racks,
'For ever' on their chains;
'For ever' burneth in the fire,
'For ever' ever reigns."

Doleful thought, "If I could but get out, then I should be happy." "If there were a hope of deliverance, then I might be peaceful: but here I am for ever." Sirs, if ye would escape eternal torments, if ye would be found amongst the number of the blessed, the road to heaven can only be by prayer, &c.*

Although his doctrine may have remained unchanged we do not meet with such language in Mr. Spurgeon's later sermons. It has come to be felt on all sides that more restraint must be exercised in speaking of the unspeakably awful mysteries of the future world. Some preachers are content to use the language of Scripture on the subject without attempting to elucidate its full meaning.

Closely associated with this subject is the change that has come about in the conceptions held by Christian people concerning the Second Advent, the Judgment Day, the Resurrection, and, indeed, the whole subject of Eschatology.

1. As regards the *Second Advent*, there is still a school of eager advocates of its near approach in some sudden descent from the clouds when Christ will appear on earth in visible form surrounded by hosts of white-winged angels. But the number and

* Quoted in *Life in Christ*. Third Edition. Page 59.

influence of these good people must not be estimated by the size of the posters with which they periodically placard the street hoardings. While their ideas represent a common belief of the earlier part of the century the great majority of Christian people have let such expectations fade out of their consciousness. Those who give any attention to the question for the most part turn to one or other of two lines of thought. The first is to accept the view ably expounded in a work entitled the *Parousia*, by Dr. Russell, which appeared in the year 1878. This book sets forth the conviction that the second coming of Christ was to occur during the lifetime of His contemporaries, and in point of fact did actually occur at the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish religion with its persecuting hindrance to the spread of Christianity. The other way of regarding the subject is to give it a wholly spiritual interpretation, understanding Christ's reign to be the full establishment of His kingdom on earth in the spread of the Gospel and the pervasion of society by Christian ideas.

2. Formerly, it was quite general to believe that the *Last Judgment* was to take place on one great day when the dead would be raised at the sound of a trumpet, and be gathered before an actual visible white throne to receive the final decision of their

destinies. That once popular book entitled *Peep of Day*, on which so many young people were brought up, set forth this notion in the clearest, strongest language, with the result that to nervous little boys and girls the rumbling of thunder, the sight of a red sunset, and even the crowing of a cock were signs that the Judge was at the door. It is a happy thing for children that these terrors have been swept away. It will not be a happy thing for the world if with them the very notion of judgment to come is abandoned as a superstition of the world's childhood. That would be both a flat denial of the spirit as well as of the letter of Scripture, and also a violent contradiction of the instinct of justice, deep-rooted in the conscience of mankind. But people have been led to see that the pictorial language of the Bible must not be interpreted literally here any more than in other places where by common consent it is allowed to have a metaphorical signification. Accordingly it has come to be taught and believed, either that the judgment of every soul takes place at the moment of death; or, as it is thought to be set forth in the Johannine version of our Lord's language on the subject, that it is already going on during this life, a continuous process working out its results by constant laws of the spiritual world; or, again, if some definite event

of the future is to be looked for, corresponding to what is foreshadowed by the parabolic language of Scripture, still that this will happen in the spiritual world, as an experience of the soul rather than in a visible dramatic scene.

3. Then as regards the *Resurrection*. Until recently it was all but universally held that at the sound of the last trump mouldering corpses would be quickened in their coffins, the very dust of former generations re-formed into bones and flesh, the tombstones uplifted, the graves burst open, and the dead brought forth from the churchyards. Michael Angelo's terrible picture of the Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel only portrays with the realising mastership of genius what was generally believed to be certain to happen at the end of the world. But all such ideas have been gradually receding, even where they have not been actually abandoned. Some slight knowledge of physiology and chemistry, bringing a recognition of what happens to the elements of a decomposed body, has been enough to make reasonable people perceive the inconceivable character of the old idea of the resurrection of the body. When an enlightened imagination is set to work to make out what this would involve, it becomes simply impossible of acceptance. Then it has been pointed out that this old dogma of the Church is directly contrary to

the teaching of St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he affirms that the body which is buried is not the body that will rise, and, indeed, contrary to the teaching of Christ concerning the condition of men and women after the resurrection. Some people have tried to make out that a sort of seed of the new body lies buried in the grave ready to germinate at the resurrection. But the general tendency is to give up all belief in any future emergence from the tomb on the part of the re-awakened dead, and to understand the resurrection as merely the Jewish form of thought for a future life, though it is not denied that this future life may have some kind of bodily clothing.

X.

SOCIAL QUESTIONS.

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Not merely one chapter in a small book, but many large volumes would be requisite for an adequate description of the social progress of the century. All that can be attempted here, and indeed all that properly falls within the range of this survey, is to indicate the spirit and character of that progress, and in particular its relation to the enlargement of the thought and life of religion. What is most astounding about the earlier state of affairs is not so much the actual degradation and misery in which a considerable part of the population was plunged as the supine apathy of the churches with regard to these evils. And what is most cheering in the newer age is the awakening of Christian people to the social aspects of the salvation that Jesus Christ brought into the world. A hundred years ago the dominant idea in religion was the salvation of the individual soul; to-day it is the redemption of society. The typical parable for that time was "The Prodigal Son"; the typical parable for our age is "The Good Samaritan." We have learnt

to note that Jesus not only sent His apostles out to "preach the gospel"; that He also commissioned them to "heal the sick and cast out demons."

We should be grossly unjust to some of the best characters of the century if we failed to recognise that quite in its early decades, noble, self-sacrificing men and women were labouring for the relief of human misery and the restraint of cruelty and injustice. This was the time of the great philanthropists, the majority of whom owed the impulse that carried them on to the stirring of the evangelical movement in religion, from which sprang the philanthropic societies, orphanages, and asylums, as well as the missionary, Bible, and tract societies. Nevertheless, the enlightened founders of these institutions were the few, and they often had to toil against a mass of ignorance, prejudice, and indifference, before they could command any support for the reforms and improvements they were desirous of introducing. There is a significant reflection on this point in Lord Shaftesbury's journal, at the date July 4, 1840:—"I find," he writes, "that Evangelical religionists are not those on whom I can rely. The Factory Question, and every question for what is called 'humanity,' receive as much support from the 'men of the world' as from the men who

say they will have nothing to do with it."* Shaftesbury himself is the greatest figure in the social progress of the period. It is owing to his labours more than to the efforts of any other one man that the frightful abuses abounding at the beginning of the century have been to a large extent swept away.

If we were inclined to become pessimistic in our study of the present state of society—the inequality, the injustice, the misery, the vice that still abound, we might find a wholesome corrective in an examination of the condition of England a hundred years ago. At that time there were no factory laws, no sanitary regulations, no Ragged Schools, Reformatories, or Industrial Schools; no Board Schools, no Mechanics' Institutes, no Working-Men's Clubs, no Post-office Savings Banks, no Technical Classes, no Free Libraries, no cheap good literature, no trained nurses. The poor laws were pauperising aids to wages; the stamp duties prevented the man of small means from getting his rights at law; guardians of the poor in name were guardians of the rates in fact; convicts were sent to rot in the hulks; debtors' prisons were dens of vice and misery; the brutal punishment of

* *Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury.* By E. Hodder. Vol. 1., page 300.

crime bred criminals; and the treatment of helpless, demented people was even more cruel than that of hardened criminals. A century ago unhappy people who had lost their reason were confined, under the authority of harsh officers, significantly known as "keepers," in horrible "mad-houses," where they were treated like wild beasts, the only end in view being to prevent them from becoming a danger to the community. On holiday occasions the public were allowed to visit Bethlehem Hospital and amuse themselves by staring at the caged inmates as at the animals in a menagerie, a charge of twopence each being made for admission to the show. It was customary for the lunatics to be left to themselves chained to their beds with bread and water by their side from Saturday night till Monday morning.

Until the middle of the present century sweeps employed boys and even girls to climb and clean chimneys; and if the children failed in alacrity at their difficult and dangerous task heartless masters would prod their feet with spikes or burn straw under them. Sometimes they were suffocated with soot, sometimes wedged in narrow places so tightly that they died from exhaustion before they could be extricated. In a harrowing article on the subject, which he contributed to *The Edinburgh Review*, Sidney Smith tells, among other horrors, of a flue

only nine inches square through which a little boy was compelled to force himself. When public attention was directed to these outrageous practices it was said in defence that they were unavoidable; any interference with them would increase the risk of fire in the metropolis.

The abominations of the factories at the beginning of the century were chiefly associated with the apprenticeship system. Manufacturers would engage workhouse children, undertaking to feed and keep them during the five years for which they were indentured, with the result that they had them absolutely in their power. This was nothing less than child-slavery of the worst possible description. Ill-fed, uneducated, working for long hours till they sometimes fell into the machinery from sheer weariness, cuffed and flogged without a chance of making their complaints heard, for there were no factory inspectors in those days, many died like flies in autumn, and those who survived, stunted in growth, ignorant, often diseased, had no prospect before them but to remain in the hated scene of their childhood's misery to obtain a livelihood for the rest of their days.

Even worse than this state of affairs in the factories was the condition of the mines. The miners were like savages, men working in a state of

nudity, women clad only in ragged trousers. Young children were forced to drag trucks through passages but a foot and a half high, going on their hands and knees with a girdle round the naked waist and a chain between the legs. Where the passages admitted of women crawling through they were harnessed to larger trucks. Children were employed in the mines as young as four years of age to take charge of doors, opening and closing them for the trucks as they passed through.

Lord Shaftesbury took up one after another of these evils, working at them with indomitable perseverance till they were swept away by the strong arm of legislation. He spared himself no trouble in acquainting himself with the facts, and with this object in view he prosecuted inquiries, visiting the spots where the abominations were going on and investigating them in person. The first abuse he attacked was that of the mad-houses. It was chiefly owing to his exposure of what was going on in these places that the "Commissioners of Lunacy" were appointed, and completely new methods of treating lunatics introduced, in which the welfare of these unhappy people was studied and every effort made to alleviate their distress, and where possible to cure their mysterious malady. Then he fought a long battle with the abuses of the factory system. Some

idea of the difficulty of effecting reform in this direction may be gained from the fact that John Bright, "the people's tribune," who with Richard Cobden fought and won the battle for the free loaf, vehemently opposed Lord Shaftesbury's proposals in language so strong that he was afterwards compelled to apologise for it. After many bitter disappointments reform was introduced, young child labour in the factories forbidden, the hours of work for women and children restricted, and various sanitary and other improvements insisted on, with the appointment of inspectors to see that the regulations were duly carried out. The great fight was on the "Ten Hours Bill." After many rebuffs and disappointments this passed into law in the year 1838. Reviewing the position of the factory question in the year 1844, Lord Shaftesbury—then Lord Ashley—enumerates some of their gains as follows :—

"An enactment limiting the labour of children to six hours a day; protection against accident, death, and mutilation, from the unguarded state of machinery; and the important provision that no woman, of whatever age, should be employed in any mill or factory more than twelve hours a day."*

Further extensions of factory legislation took place in the year 1864, and repeatedly in more recent times.

* *Life*, Vol. II., page 73.

In the year 1842—in spite of Lord Palmeraton's taunts—the Colliery Bill was passed, absolutely forbidding the employment of women or children in coal mines. In the case of the climbing boys, notwithstanding Sidney Smith's exposure of the evil in the pages of *The Edinburgh Review* and the continuous efforts of Lord Ashley and other philanthropists, there was delay for some years; but in 1840 an Act was passed punishing with a fine all who should "compel, or knowingly allow, any one under the age of twenty-one years to ascend or descend a chimney, or enter a flue, for the purpose of sweeping or cleaning it."

Meanwhile, from time to time, able writers came to the aid of the social reformers. Thus Mrs. Browning's pathetic *Cry of the Children* was a powerful appeal for the child victims of factory management, as Hood's *Song of the Shirt* was an appeal for sympathy for the oppressed seamstress. Charles Dickens was heart and soul with this social reform movement. We owe it to him that evils connected with the workhouses, nursing among the sick poor, and debtors' prisons, and cheap boarding-schools, were dragged into the light for execration at the hands of an indignant public.

The Progress has seemed slow to its eager advocates, and it has not been without serious reverses.

Yet when we look over the whole field of the century we cannot but feel a sense of profound gratitude for the immense strides that have been made out of the darkness towards the light of a full day that still lies in the future. Perhaps the darkest periods were at the beginning and middle of the century—during and immediately after the French war, and again at the time of the Paris revolution of 1848. But the latter period was really one of ferment out of which what was most hopeful for the latter half of the century was to arise. Two witnesses from the year 1833 may serve to throw a cheering light on the intermediate period and show how the seeds of the better life of the century were already germinating. One is an article in *The Edinburgh Review* on "The Progress of the People," which calls attention to a wonderful rise and spread of sound, instructive popular literature. The writer describes three magazines that had quickly attained phenomenal circulation: first and chief, *The Penny Magazine*, with a weekly circulation of 200,000; then its clerical rival, *The Saturday Magazine*, of the S.P.C.K.; and, thirdly, *Chambers' Journal*, each of the latter with a circulation of 60,000.*

* Incidentally, this article shows that the peculiar High Church methods were sufficiently in evidence at this early date, saying of the second of these magazines, "The High Church party on this, as upon every other occasion, suffered the lead to be taken by the

The other witness is the *Greville Memoirs*. Writing in this same year—1833—the observant author says:

> We continue at peace, and with every prospect of so being for some time, we are on good terms with France, and by degrees inducing the French to extend their incipient principles of free trade, to the benefit of both countries. In Ireland there never has been a period for many years when the country was so quiet; it may not last, but so it is at the present moment. In England trade flourishes, running in a deep and steady stream; there are improvements and employments in all branches. The landed interest has suffered, and suffers still, but the wages of labour have not fallen with the rents of landlords, and the agricultural labourers were never better off. Generally there is a better spirit abroad, less discontent, greater security, and those vague apprehensions are lulled to rest, which, when in morbid activity, carrying themselves from one object to another, are partly the cause and partly the effect of an evil state of things. We hear nothing of associations, unions, and public meetings, and, compared with what it was, the world seems in a state of repose.*

During this early period many of the philanthropic movements that happily characterise the Christian activity of the century had their rise. This may be illustrated by a list of the institutions founded by one

Low Church and the Sects, or, at least, by those persons who love to convey instruction to all classes alike, without distinction of religious denomination. As soon as their labours proved successful, the clerical party came into the field, and we should not be surprised to find them hereafter assuming the merit of first printing cheap works, as they habitually do, we perceive, take the credit of having begun the education of the poor."—*Edinburgh Review*, Vol. lxxvi., page 363.

* *Greville Memoirs*, Vol. III., page 29.

man with a genius for philanthropic organisation, Dr. Andrew Reed :—

1812 London Orphan Asylum.
1827 Infant Orphan Asylum.
1844 Asylum for Fatherless Children.
1847 Earlswood Asylum for Idiots.
1854 Royal Hospital for Incurables.
1859 Eastern Counties Idiot Asylum.

Over a million pounds was raised for the founding of these half-dozen charities. Other orphanages such as Müller's, Barnardo's, Spurgeon's, and innumerable charitable institutions of various kinds cover the century with monuments of practical Christian kindness.

To the eyes of the world the greatest visible fact illustrative of the progress of the century in England is the expansion of the empire, especially in the colonies; and the consequent growth of "Greater Britain." Nothing in our external history is more wonderful than the continuous, silent flow of the vast river of emigration, which a wise Christian activity has taken part in promoting and assisting. It is impossible to enlarge on this subject here. Nor is it within our scope to do more than allude to the Temperance Crusade, which was unknown a century ago, and when commenced ignored by the churches; but which has grown into one of the leading

branches of Christian work, supported by the great majority of men and women who are labouring for the welfare of the people. Few changes are more striking than that which has come over Christian society during the century concerning this movement—once despised as a freak of a little group of faddists, and now honoured as a wise and necessary instrument of social reform—leading statesmen, archbishops, men of science, and writers and speakers of the first rank advocating its claims.

Meanwhile, social movements of quite another nature have been stirring among us. All that has been noticed as yet has come within the present scheme of society which it has not attempted to change very seriously. But bold spirits have gone further. It has been maintained that the social fabric is radically unsound, that much of our philanthropic work is short-sighted and mistaken because it tends to prop up institutions which must be swept away before any hope for the betterment of the people can be realised. In the middle of the century Republicanism was advocated as the only remedy for the inequality and injustice of the present social order. We have heard little of this during recent years. The long reign of a wise and good queen took the heart out of the Republican propaganda,

and left it high and dry, an impracticable, academic discussion. But Socialism, which might or might not include Republicanism, has been a factor of growing force in the thought and life of the people, not, perhaps, much in England as regards definite socialistic schemes, but still in its spirit and tendency. The first half of the century was individualistic; the second half has tended to become collectivist. Freedom was the earlier ideal; brotherhood is the later. The policy of *laissez-faire* is thought to have broken down, and the State is repeatedly called upon to take over and control the interests of the community.

The Chartist movement was a symptom of the rising demand for more radical reform than leading politicians of either party were prepared to concede. Regarded as dangerous revolutionaries by the bulk of their contemporaries, the Chartists included in their ranks men of the most disinterested devotion to the welfare of their fellows, some of them men of undoubted Christian character. The fact, that the programme for persistently advocating which they were sent to prison has been virtually carried out by the slow process of successive acts of legislation, has led to a revision of the nation's verdict on these pioneers of reform. That something more than the cautious

policy already attempted was necessary, if the people were to be saved from oppression and wrong, is apparent in the eloquent pages of Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present*.

The "Christian Socialism," with which Maurice and more especially Kingsley were associated, recognised the serious state of affairs at a time when strikes led to riots and bloodshed; it aimed at the salvation of society by large revolutionary changes, but in a Christian temper and in alliance with the Church. Kingsley's novel *Yeast* throws light not only on the terrible confusion existing in the minds of ignorant people, groaning under commercial tyranny; but also on the aims of earnest, good men, who were striving for the establishment of a better condition. It is difficult for us to-day to understand the horror with which "Christian Socialism" was regarded fifty years ago, or the anger which Maurice's and Kingsley's connection with it roused in the minds of the Church. Dr. Jelf wrote a formal letter of protest to Maurice on the subject. This was earlier than the "Eternal Punishment" controversy; and perhaps the feelings then engendered may have tended in no small degree to embitter that controversy when it arose. After expressing his regret that Maurice should have connected himself with such a movement as "Chris-

tian Socialism," the Principal of King's College goes on to say:

> I wish I could end here, or that I could speak in similar terms of Mr. Kingsley's writings; but it is, unfortunately, a part of my duty to speak plainly about him, and I confess that I have rarely met with a more reckless and dangerous writer, &c.*

One aim of the Christian Socialists was to supplant competition by co-operation; and we owe to their teaching and work the establishment of the co-operative societies which have since grown to striking proportions, especially among the factory people of the Midlands, although as yet more in the way of distribution than production.

And now as we come to the last decades of the century we see an increasing urgency of social questions, and side by side with this, a growing eagerness on the part of earnest Christian people to take part in the solution of them. There was a time when the Churches stood coldly aloof from such matters, as none of their business. Remember what Shaftesbury said about the most active Christian people of his day.† Is it surprising that eager reformers treated the Churches with contempt, if not with positive animosity? Some even went the length of proclaiming themselves atheists because they were

* *Life of F. D. Maurice.* Vol. II., page 79.

† See page 172.

philanthropists! Was there ever a more horrible confusion of thought—as if God did not hate the injustice and wrong they hated, as if He did not long for the very well-being of the people the best of them were seeking? So it came about that Mr. Bradlaugh took up the work that had been neglected by the disciples of the Son of Man Who, when on earth, made it His business to go about doing good. But of late a great change has come over the churches, which may be said to be nothing less than a baptism with the spirit of sympathy. Formerly it was said that attendance at the weekly prayer meeting was the test of the vitality of a church; now we look for the gauge in its social activities. There is no need for these to supersede the prayer-meeting, and undoubtedly if the spirit of prayer declines and the higher inspiration of the church is neglected, the external agencies will become mere mechanical affairs, which in time are sure to flag and fail. Still it is now the case that the Church best reveals the energy of its spiritual life by the self-sacrificing devotion of its social work.

Mr. Ruskin's trenchant teachings on commercial and social morality have contributed in no small degree to this result. In quite another region the rise and growth of the Salvation Army is a significant fact pointing in the same direction. In

Darkest England General Booth calls on the Christian people of the land to rescue the submerged hosts of the miserable, poverty-stricken denizens of the great cities of the richest country in the world. It is no longer possible to ignore this awful mass of misery. One of the most Christlike movements of the century has been the work of the London City Mission, and similar agencies in large towns, as beneficent as it is unassuming. But we have come to see that the simple house-to-house visitation, assisted as it may be with meetings in mission-halls, is not enough to meet the desperate needs of town reformation. You do not much help a starving man by offering him a tract; unfortunately, it is discovered that you scarcely help him any more by offering him a loaf. What he wants is such a condition of society as will not drive him down to the level of starvation. In the great majority of cases the old-fashioned charity doles are found to be more hurtful than helpful. A more difficult task has opened up before us. It is to cut out the root of pauperism, and not merely deal with its products. Similarly, in other directions where social evils press on the vitality of the community, we are now called to go beyond the antiquated attempts at alleviation, in order to work out some great schemes of prevention.

The churches are learning to take their part in

these efforts, maintaining missions according to enlightened methods, in order to elevate and not pauperise, supporting "settlements" in populous neighbourhoods, and helping on measures for the public benefit both in local councils and in the Imperial Parliament. This is the case with men and women who do not believe in the formal constitutional connection of Church and State, the most ardent Free Churchmen being foremost in insisting on the application of Christian principles to legislation for the well-being of the people, and in giving their attention to the public service on School Boards and Boards of Guardians.

XI.

PREACHERS AND PREACHING.

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He would be a bold man who ventured on the assertion that the preachers of the end of the century were greater than those of its early decades. The age that listened to a Robert Hall will not be easily outstripped in pulpit eloquence. Probably the most effective preacher ever known in England was George Whitefield, who flourished in the middle of the previous century. Eloquence is a child of inspiration; though it may be cultivated as an art, it cannot be manufactured. Its advent—sometimes in unlikely quarters—seems to be independent of the progress of ideas. In some respects that progress may militate against it and check its free development. Preachers of the present age seem incapable of emulating the feats of their predecessors, who could sway a multitude with their words as the ears of corn are bent before the sweeping blast. But this is not so much a mark of deficiency of power on their part as it is a sign of the changed condition of the minds of the men and women who constitute the bulk of modern congrega-

tions. Much of the old, vigorous eloquence was strong in its effects because designedly adapted to a rough, uncultivated audience. The spread of popular education and the cultivation of discriminating taste have rendered some of the old pulpit devices hopelessly inappropriate to modern hearers. Of course, this cannot be said of a really great orator such as Robert Hall, whose style was as perfect from a literary point of view as it was effective in popular influence. But another consideration must be added. The older generation of preachers took it for granted that their people had no doubts concerning the great doctrines with which they dealt; and, for the most part, they were right in their assumption. It is true there were doubters, and even professed unbelievers; but these people were treated as "sceptics" and "infidels," separated as by a great gulf from the respectable church-and-chapel-going folk, to be preached *at* rather than preached *to*. Consequently, the preachers could make their appeals with perfect assurance that their proclamation of the Gospel would be received as a message from God, and their thunderous declamation of judgment to come, with its threats of everlasting punishment for the rebellious, listened to with shuddering awe. So well established was the verbal authority of the Bible that the preacher had but to quote a text to deter-

mine a controversy. This gave him an immense advantage, and contributed enormously to the effectiveness of his pulpit eloquence.

The Evangelical Magazine for January, 1800, contains an extract from the diary of a minister who, having heard the celebrated Church of England clergyman, Romaine, preach at Blackfriars in the year 1794, makes the following comment: "The sermon was short and good, but without much order and method. The people were very attentive, and to all appearance much affected and comforted. I observed that he did not attempt to *prove* anything, but took all his doctrines for granted." An awakening of the restless spirit of inquiry began early in the century. Jay of Bath referred to it in the address that he gave at his own ordination, saying, "A disposition for novelty in religious truth is the spring of error running through the flowery field of speculation into the gulf of apostasy."* That there were some who had already moved from the old standard of Gospel preaching is suggested by Jay's remarks in his confession of belief, where he says: "The doctrine of the Atonement, not in a reserved, ambiguous way, in which many use the terms when denying them, but 'Christ dying for our sins,' in the proper sense of the expression, I consider as that

* *Life*, page 69.

which constitutes the good news, or glad tidings, which the Gospel signifies."* The context would suggest that the people whose ideas he is repudiating are the Unitarians. There is little or no evidence that such views had as yet found a lodgment in orthodox congregations.

How entirely different is the situation we see about us to-day! It is not only that education has encouraged the congregation to make heavier demands on the preacher. The age is critical. A spirit of inquiry is in the air. People are no longer content to sit under their minister; some of them are more ready to sit upon him. The old authority of the pulpit has disappeared. Round assertions count for little. The preacher must "prove all things." Nor will his hearers be satisfied with mere "proof-texts," however long an array of them he may have marshalled. He must show his teaching to be what they reckon "reasonable," or they will have none of it.

It is inevitable that the old style of preaching should be abandoned and different methods adopted for addressing people of this temper. The change thus brought about reflects the liberalism of thought and widening of interest that we have seen to be so generally characteristic of the religious life of the

* *Life*, page 79.

age. This has meant modifications both in the style and methods, and in the matter and substance of preaching.

1. As regards style and methods, the change is all in the direction of simplicity, unconventionality, naturalness. With the decline of awe for the pulpit, that once venerable institution could not maintain its old, formal dignity. The change has affected even the material structure. The mahogany three-decker has disappeared. Step by step the pulpit has been brought nearer the level of the pew. In many Nonconformist churches it has been so widened out into a platform that its old friends would not recognise it. And we no longer hear the rolling periods formerly poured forth from its exalted summit—Wardlaw's finished eloquence, Raffles' fervid rhetoric, Chalmers' massive arguments, Angel James's earnest pleading, Melville's ornate oratory, James Parsons' worked-up climaxes, Liefchild's thunderous perorations. The splendour, the vehemence, the passion have passed away, and in place of these old glories of the pulpit we have the modest exposition, the plain reasoning, the direct speech of a man talking to his brother man. In general, preaching has become less rhetorical and more conversational. Dr. Dale advised ministers to study the great platform speakers in order to master

the robust, practical style that commands the attention of a public meeting.

Of course, so great a change must involve loss of power in some directions. The emotions are not now so readily stirred as by the old method. Hearers of Dr. Liefchild tell us how they would wait patiently through the doctrinal exposition which constituted the body of his sermon, the people somewhat listless since the preacher was evidently reserving his strength for the grand effort at the conclusion. Suddenly they would sit up, all attention, as they saw the well-known signs that what they were waiting for was coming. Pulling himself together, stepping back, throwing up his head, the preacher would pour out a flood of impassioned eloquence that simply carried his hearers away with him. When he described the terrors of wrath they would feel an actual creeping of the skin and their hair lifting with horror; if his description was of the bliss of heaven they would be melted with rapture. When Jay was preaching people would rise from their seats, come out of their pews, and cluster about the pulpit quite spell-bound. Old men who witnessed such scenes deplore the loss of passion in the pulpit. But is the loss so serious as they suppose? There is a place for the emotions in religion; and a cold, unfeeling style of address can never persuade an

audience. Still, it may be asked whether the lasting result of the old kind of eloquence was at all commensurate with its immediate effects. How far did it leave the people who were drawn under its spell better men and women, more just in business, more kindly in friendship, more pure in life? That is the test. The principal defect of Evangelicalism lay in the fact that it was disproportionately emotional; and early in the century the popular preachers were mostly of the Evangelical stamp. It did not cultivate a robust understanding, a wholesome conscience, a strenuous will. Now, while the old preaching appealed chiefly to the feelings, the newer preaching works more at the reason and conscience.

Let us take two or three instances of the change. It may appear a little strange to turn to the great opponent of liberalism in religion for a leader in what might be called the liberalising, certainly the modernising, of the pulpit. But those who have heard Newman preach confirm the impression made on the readers of his sermons that they indicate a new departure in pulpit methods. The great University sermons delivered at St. Mary's, Oxford, equally with the simpler parish sermons, show an abandonment of all the old rhetorical arts and tricks in exchange for earnest reasoning, and, above

all, for forcible, direct appeals to conscience. Take almost any of Newman's sermons, and, in spite of their ecclesiastical bias, you feel that the preacher is speaking straight out to you concerning great realities.

In London Thomas Binney broke through the conventions of pompous pulpit oratory, introducing a conversational style of speech with masculine thought and a common-sense way of treating his subjects that drew around him a remarkable congregation, consisting mainly of men, and very largely of young men. There was a dignity in his bearing, a grave and reverent tone in his utterance, that made his hearers listen with profound respect, though he discarded all the arts of rhetoric. The true preacher cannot be appreciated through the medium of printed sermons, and brief extracts give but a feeble notion even of those sermons. Still, some faint idea of the contrast between the rhetoric of the older school of pulpit orators and Binney's plain, unpretentious, but remarkably forcible and effective style of speech may be suggested by a comparison of passages. Here, for instance, is a passage from a sermon of Dr. Wardlaw on "Justification by Faith":

> You give the work of Christ the same place that is given by Papists to their fancied works of supererogation.

If your own stock of merit should not be quite sufficient, you look to Him to make it up. If your scale should prove a little light, you expect His righteousness will be thrown in to turn it. Unworthy, presumptuous, blasphemous thought. Gracious Saviour! and is this the grateful and generous return made to Thee by Thy sinful creatures? Is this all Thou hast had to do for poor, self-ruined sinners? this the whole result of Thy humiliation and agonies and blood? Is this the amount of honour due Thee for the wonders of that love which "passeth knowledge"?—not that sinners may glorify Thee, but that Thou mayest help sinners to glorify themselves.

Still more characteristic of the rhetorical style is the following passage from a sermon preached by Dr. Raffles to the juvenile members of the London Missionary Society in May, 1848:

Now, assuredly, my brethren, we live in an age, we are on the eve of times, we are entering on an era, in which the young of the rising generation, those of either sex who are just entering into life, will have obligations and responsibilities devolving upon them far heavier than their fathers ever knew. The world seems to be in a kind of transition state; old systems are breaking up, ancient dynasties are passing away [this was at the time of the revolution in France]—all around is most agitated and convulsed; states and empires are heaving as with the throes of parturition, and new political progenies are about to be born. What may be their character, what the altered state of things they may produce, what the openings, the facilities, the calls, the occasions they may afford for the propagation of the Gospel, it is impossible for us to say; but our youth, our young men especially—they who are to constitute the next generation of agents in the maintenance and diffusion of all that is enlightened and wise, excellent and holy, in the principles and spirit by which mankind is to be influenced, with which society is to be imbued—they must gird themselves for a glorious work—if

they would fulfil the hopes of their fathers, realise the fond expectations of the Church, and prove themselves equal to the position which they occupy and worthy of the times in which it will be their privilege to live.

Here the orator's art is to produce an overwhelming effect by piling synonyms, phrase upon phrase. We have three notes of time in the opening sentence —(1) age; (2) times; (3) era. Any one of these would have been sufficient to convey the thought. But the preacher sought to impress it by repetition. Further on we have five phrases piled one on another —(1) character; (2) state of things; (3) openings; (4) facilities; (5) occasions. In Dr. Raffles's day this was thought eloquent; it gave the idea time to spread itself out over the audience and soak in. Now we should judge it intolerable, and condemn the preacher as guilty of verbosity. After this torrent of words, let us turn to a piece of Binney's sermon on "The Power of Christ's Resurrection":

Very poor, stunted, decrepid sort of characters (he says) many Christian people are, compared with what they ought to be. And here is Christianity and the Christian ministry setting forth this grand idea, and it does not fit the mass of people—does not fit many of you. Whose fault is it? Not Christ's, not God's, not Paul's, not ours, who, as ministers, proclaim it to you. We have to look at the idea, and bow down before it, and be ashamed that we come so far short of it. But it would be a terrible thing for you if we ministers never preached above our experience. I don't like people to pray above their experience, uttering things they have never felt, but ought to have felt; but in preaching we ought to

set forth the grand idea, even if it condemns ourselves. The fault, therefore, is in you Christians, not in Christianity; and if there are few of you "setting your affection on things above," and realising already in some degree the glorious life to come, it is your fault, not the fault of the book.

How plain that is, how direct, how eminently sensible! That is it—people felt that Binney's preaching was *sensible*, that "there was no nonsense about the man," and they appreciated this. It entirely fell in with the habits and notions of Englishmen in the middle of the century, when the "Manchester School" was flourishing.

But perhaps no one more effectually broke with the old, stiff pulpit conventions, to introduce a fresh, living style of preaching, than Robertson of Brighton. The wide circulation of Robertson's sermons has had a very appreciable influence on the pulpit of England. In the originality of his method, and the effect this has wrought on the Churches, he is the most notable preacher of the century. A lofty ideal, the working of a strong, penetrating intellect, passion and poetry—above all, an intense sense of reality—are stamped upon his sermons. When they first appeared people were startled by their freshness. Here was an entirely new kind of preaching, and the charm of it was that it exactly responded to the needs of the age. It was awakening, stimulating, inspiring. One great difference

between this preaching and the conventional method was that, instead of doing their thinking for them, Robertson compelled people to think for themselves. Dip into his volumes where you will, you are sure to come upon passages that arrest attention. But the structure of the sermons is as fresh and striking as their contents. Take, for example, the sermon on "The Scepticism of Pilate"; its thoughts are arranged thus:

I.—The causes of Pilate's scepticism.
1. Indecision of character.
2. Falseness to his own convictions.
3. The taint of the worldly temper of his day.
4. That priestly bigotry which forbids inquiry and makes doubt a crime.

II.—The way appointed for discovering what is truth.
1. Independence.
2. Humbleness.
3. Action.

How clear and crisp each idea is, and how provocative of thought! Let us read a paragraph on the last point:

Lastly, action. This was Christ's rule. "If any man will do His will." A blessed rule, a plain and simple rule. Here we are in a world of mystery, where all is difficult, and very much dark, where a hundred jarring creeds declare themselves to be the truth, and all are plausible. How shall a man decide? Let him *do* the right that lies before him, much is uncertain—some things at least are clear. Whatever else may be wrong, it *must* be right to be pure, to be just and tender, and merciful and honest. It *must* be right to love and to deny one's self. Let him do the will of God and he shall know. Observe, men begin the other way. They say, If I

could but believe, then I would make my life true. If I could but be sure what is truth, then I would set to work to live in earnest. No: God says, Act, make the life true, and then you will be able to believe. Live in earnest, and you will know the answer to "What is Truth?"

As we read passages such as this we feel that we are in contact with a real soul. The preacher is not playing with us, he is not going through a professional function, he knows actual life, and he is speaking straight to the thoughts and needs of the people before him.

No survey of the preaching of the century would be complete without some reference to its greatest preacher—Charles Haddon Spurgeon; and yet singularly enough he is the last man we should point to as its representative preacher. In his teaching Spurgeon set himself against the tendency of the times, which he considered to be on the "down grade"; and even in the method of his sermons he followed the Puritans, of whose writings he was a diligent student. It is all the more strong a testimony to his genius that in spite of these unpromising characteristics he never failed to draw great crowds and, what is better, that he built up and maintained a powerful church of some 6,000 members. Endowed with a magnificent voice, a good command of idiomatic English, a rich fund of native wit, and above all a generous desire to win

souls, Spurgeon possessed a unique combination of gifts which honestly won the continuous popularity that followed him from his first boyish efforts till the end of his life. And he was, in fact, a great innovator in his preaching. When he first appeared grave men shook their heads, shocked at the daring things he said.

A very different preacher was Canon Liddon. A rich, literary style, resting on a store of cultured ideas, and suffused with a glow of passion, gave to Liddon's sermons a fascination that drew crowds to St. Paul's Cathedral whenever he was to occupy the pulpit. A champion of Anglicanism, he did not yield himself to the liberal tendencies of contemporary thought, and yet people felt that he was alive to what was going on around him, and adapting his sermons to the mental and spiritual condition of his congregation. Even in Liddon we perceive the modern spirit at work, leading to the abandonment of technical pulpit phraseology in favour of language and illustrations such as people are familiar with in secular life. Two great American preachers illustrate the same tendency. Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks both preached as men in touch with real life; the human element was always strong in their sermons.

II. When we come to the matter and substance

of preaching we are struck with a corresponding change. Early in the century the cold moral essay, of which Blair's sermons are the typical examples, had been repudiated by earnest Evangelical ministers, who felt that they had a message to deliver which stirred them, and which should be made to stir their people to the very depths of their being. This was the proclamation of a gospel of salvation from everlasting woe. Their aim was to set that proclamation forth fully and clearly, and commend it to their hearers with all the persuasive power at their command. They held that no sermon would be satisfactory in which the one supreme message was not adequately expounded. Whatever truth was chosen as the specific theme of any discourse it was felt necessary to bring it round to the all-essential Evangelical doctrines. Otherwise the minister would not be preaching "the Gospel." Very little outside this range of ideas was permitted except the ever-present claims of missionary work, and, of course, that work was for the spreading abroad of the same Gospel.

At about the middle of the century preaching began to enlarge its scope and range itself over a wider field. The earlier generation had shrunk from speculation as dangerously suggestive of heresy. But the stirring of new thought in the community

could not but affect the pulpit. For a while the preacher seemed to lag behind his congregation, and thinking men began to complain of the "pulpit platitudes" with which their intelligence was insulted. Gradually the crust of caution broke up and fresh thoughts welled through. Then we had the spectacle of the younger ministry—especially in the Nonconformist churches—forging ahead in advance of their people, sometimes to the dismay of sober-minded deacons. Various speculative questions came to be discussed in the pulpit—such as Evolution, Future Punishment, theories of the Atonement. It must be confessed that this was not infrequently done in the crudest fashion by men but ill-equipped for the difficult tasks they had undertaken. Simple people came to gather very confused notions of the discussions they heard of for the first time in their young pastor's sermons, and the immediate results were not altogether satisfactory. But this is inevitable in times of transition. Probably the same thing happened during the Reformation at the hands of indiscreet, half-educated Protestant preachers. It was unsettling; but, though it is uncomfortable to feel unsettled, it may not be altogether unwholesome if only the rude awakening leads to a wiser settlement in the end. At all events, a ferment of fresh ideas was excited, and the dull torpor towards

which most minds gravitate broken up and enlivened with some glimmering of thought. If only it could be rightly directed, that should be a beginning of better things.

Then the range of subjects dealt with in the pulpit has widened out. This does not mean a departure from sound "Gospel preaching." Rather it comes of a larger conception of what the Gospel consists of and what it involves.

In particular we have seen an increasing tendency to bring the application of religious truth to the life of mankind in this world. The preacher has fought against the sin of "other-worldliness." Sometimes he has gone too far towards converting the pulpit into a political rostrum. But probably this offence is more rare than alarmists imagine. Some of the keenest "political parsons" are most careful to keep anything like party politics out of their religious services. Still the duties of citizenship are insisted on. In fine, preaching which at the beginning of the century was largely doctrinal and eschatalogical, has taken a practical turn and come to concern itself with the affairs of everyday life.

XII.

LITERATURE, ART, AND RECREATION.

LITERATURE, ART, AND RECREATION.

The attitude of religion to the culture of the arts and the lighter relaxations of life has undergone a change during the course of the century that amounts to a revolution. A hundred years ago "serious people" labelled almost everything of the kind with the condemnatory epithet "worldly." Sermons and letters of that time class together in one category novels, concerts, theatres, dancing-rooms, and gambling dens as evil things to be shunned by the pious. There was little or no discrimination between the higher and the lower, the innocent or even the elevating, and the corrupt and degrading, among these various objects of interest in the outer world. Mr. Matthew Arnold flung his gibes at the indifference to culture evinced by the crass middle classes in England even as late as the sixties, selecting the Dissenters as the most Philistine of the Philistines, and pitying them for being out of the main current of the nation's life. But, so far as the darts of his amusing criticism went home, they struck the Evangelical in the Church of

England as surely as his Nonconformist neighbour. It was not his ecclesiastical separatism, but the Evangelicalism of his religion that led the Dissenter into a certain aloofness with regard to those arts and graces of life which the poet-critic with his Hellenic sympathies prized so highly under the name of culture. Before the rise of the Oxford Movement most "serious people" were Evangelical, and one vital characteristic of Evangelicalism was its horror of worldliness.

Do not let us be too hasty in condemning this attitude, which was maintained so strenuously by the best people of their day. It is not altogether the fault of the saints that they flee into the wilderness if they cannot build their sanctuary in Vanity Fair. The Wesleys had done much to purge that Augean stable, the England of the Georges; but we whose lot has been cast in the Victorian era can scarcely imagine the brutality and corruption that prevailed in the times of the Regency, when the first gentleman in Europe was a shameless debauchee. The manners of the Court drained down through all stages of society. Then he who would keep himself unspotted from the world must in a measure eschew the world. The popular novels of those days were preposterous, altogether unnatural romances, such as Jane Austin satirised in *Northanger Abbey*,

when they were not positively corrupt productions. To read the best of them was an idle, frivolous waste of time; to handle the worst was to touch pitch. Writers of genius were not unknown, but in spite of their great abilities it could not be denied that there was an unwholesome heat in Richardson's passionate effusions, and a brutal coarseness in the more manly productions of Fielding. It must be admitted that there was not sufficient breadth of mind in the early Evangelicals to appreciate the sterling merits of these great writers while gravely deprecating their defects. That is an obvious consequence of the intellectual narrowness with which all along we have had to see they were afflicted. Still, to be just, we must not deny that the principal reason why these good, earnest people turned from even the great novel-writers, lay in the moral faults of their works; and the bulk of the popular authors were of a much lower grade. It is true that there was *The Vicar of Wakefield*, perhaps within its limits the most perfect prose composition of the Augustan age of English literature. Miss Edgeworth's tales, as wholesome in their morals as they are admirable in style—indeed, they are only too didactic in their intention—had seen the light before the close of the last century. Then came Jane Austen with her gentle satire on

the follies of society, and the great Sir Walter Scott, creator of the historical novel. But it took time for the change to be appreciated on the part of people who had been deeply prejudiced against the novel by writers of a very different character, especially as they had been trained to confine their attention to interests quite out of the range of such a subject as imaginative literature. If this may be said of the novel, with double emphasis may it be repeated of the theatre. I must confess that I have not been able to obtain satisfactory information as to the quality of the average popular concert of those times. But analogy would point to the suggestion that in vulgarity of taste, if in nothing worse, it would not be found lagging far behind other forms of amusement.

And now, how all this is changed! Bishop Wilberforce once pointed out that in his day—the middle of the century—while the world was approaching the Church, the Church was also approaching the world, so that the ancient chasm between them was narrowing and threatening to disappear. If that was true fifty years ago, certainly it is not less true to-day. In so far as it means a lowering of our ideal, a relaxing of moral fibre, a slackening of the eternal conflict with "the world, the flesh, and the devil," this is no note of progress;

it must be pronounced a mark of degeneration. But a closer examination of the change that has come over the face of society will not land us in a wholly pessimistic conclusion. The healthy enlargement of which we have seen abundant evidence in other regions of thought and life has manifested itself here also.

The approximation of religion and literature has been mutual. In the eighteenth century there was some really fine religious literature. The mildly pious essays with which Addison varied his usually lighter contributions to *The Spectator* brought religion under the notice of the general reader. The greatest religious work of the century, William Law's *Serious Call*, was also one of its most masterly literary productions. Berkeley's *Minute Philosopher*, a work of lofty apologetic aim in defence of the Christian faith, almost rivals Plato in the charm of its dialogue. But it was otherwise at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then an estrangement between literature and devotion was painfully apparent. For the most part the pious writers of the time were like the conies—"feeble folk." A conspicuous exception may be seen in the case of John Foster, whose brilliant essay, *On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion*, however, affords a mine of information as to the lack of literary taste

on the part of religious people of Evangelical views. Foster exposes this with pitiless severity, deploring it as a great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel among the cultured classes. But as the century advanced literature came to concern itself more with religion, and *pari passu*, though owing to wholly different causes, religious people woke up to the merits of literature and other arts and graces of life.

The change is apparent in the highest regions, among the ideas of the great poets. A profoundly religious spirit pervades the poetry of Wordsworth, even in the early period; later, in its decline, it is distinctly "churchy." In the second quarter of the century Wordsworth was taking rank among the great poets in the estimation of competent critics; but it was not till after his death, which occurred in 1850, that his influence widely affected the reading public. Coleridge had ceased to be a poet when he became a theologian, but even *The Ancient Mariner* sounds the note of the new literary treatment of religion in the lines:

> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small:
> For the dear God, who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

Byron and Shelley raised the cry of revolt, the one with theatrical cynicism, the other in a dreamland of wild fancies; and Keats, melancholy and beauti-

ful, is wholly pagan. But when we come to the middle of the century three poets appear as the interpreters of the most profound religious thought of the age. Matthew Arnold, in some respects as pagan as Keats, for his sympathy is with the Greek in admiring serenity, which he confesses to be unattainable in our restless age, is the poet who interprets the pain and weariness that follow the break-up of the old order, but have none of the joyous enthusiasm that welcomes the new. Thus he writes how we "jaded English" rush through life,

> And see all sights from pole to pole,
> And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
> And never once possess our soul
> Before we die.

A fuller, richer note is sounded by Alfred Tennyson, who, however, is still the interpreter of the age rather than its prophet. In *In Memoriam* we see how keenly this greatest poet of the mid-century felt the upheaval of thought resulting from the conquests of science, and especially the transforming conception of evolution. Tennyson perceived the temptation to pessimism that lurked in the new exact study of physical phenomena as when he exclaimed:

> Nature, red in tooth and claw
> With rapine, shrieks against our creed.

And yet he resisted the temptation, and left us the noble heritage of faith triumphant over doubt even after daring to look the darkest questions in the face. That is entirely different from Milton's Puritan faith and the mediæval faith of Dante, each unquestioning within the limits of its own orthodoxy. But here Tennyson is outdone by Browning, the jubilant optimist in an age of pessimism. Little Pippa's song:

> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn;
> God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world!

—a song that startles a guilty pair in the crisis of an awful tragedy—contains the essence of the poet's creed, which is magnificently assured, although, unlike the simple factory girl of his fancy, Browning was fully cognisant of the gloomy facts that beget despair in feebler observers. In that great poem of Providence, where he almost touches the level of Hebrew prophecy, *Rabbi ben Ezra*, Browning shows how much more his assurance for the future is than that of Tennyson, who could but

> Faintly trust the larger hope

—a hope which is best interpreted by Mr. Watts' melancholy picture which bears the word "Hope" for its title. The old rabbi can say:

Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design.
I, who saw power, see now love perfect too;
Perfect I call Thy plan;
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete—I trust what Thou shalt do!

It is no small ground for thankfulness that the two poets who filled the larger part of the century were both men of Christian faith, and that both devoted their genius to the exposition and solution of the greatest practical problems of life and religion. Unhappily, the close of the century did not sustain the high tone seen in Tennyson and Browning. William Watson is confessedly agnostic, and Mr. Stephen Phillips employs his superb powers to illustrate what apparently he conceives to be the irresistible sway of passion over human nature. But it is too early to say how far such mephitic vapours as hover over our latest poetry will succeed in poisoning the wholesome influence of the two great mid-century poets.

When we turn to the prose writers of the century, perhaps the two writers—apart from the mighty host of novelists—who stand out most conspicuously are Carlyle and Ruskin. Each of these is marked by intense moral earnestness. Carlyle, while injuring his message by his perverse idolatry of strength, is the prophet of sincerity and action. His influence in the destruction of pretences, the shaming his age

into a certain simple honesty of life, the stimulating of practical activity in place of the dreamy devotion that characterised the old type of saintliness, has been felt in the Church as well as in the world. Ruskin elevates the idea of art by vehemently insisting on its ethical character. In his later writings as a social reformer, he shows how the spirit of chivalry—honour, courtesy, considerateness—was called for as much in trade as in war. But the vast bulk of the prose writing, and even more of the reading of the century, is absorbed by the novel. In literature this is pre-eminently the century of fiction. Every year sees more new novels than new days. The old evangelical horror of this form of literature has entirely disappeared. It would be impossible to taboo it in the families of our present-day churches, even if we were as anxious to do so as our ancestors of a hundred years ago. It appears as the innocent serial tale in the so-called religious magazine; and people who are earnest in their endeavours after the higher life no longer confine their reading to what is technically religious, as "serious people" in the beginning of the century were supposed to do.

The causes of this change of attitude towards the novel are very various. A passion for fiction is in the air, from the influence of which it is as vain to

expect the modern young person to escape, as for a child exposed to the infection of measles to avoid taking the complaint when the epidemic is raging. There are thousands of people who read nothing but novels. Undoubtedly, such a habit tends to superficiality of thought. But two remarks may be made in mitigation of that conclusion—*First*, it is more educational only to read novels than not to read at all. If they had lived a century earlier most of these voracious readers of fiction would have read nothing at all, and their minds would have been narrowed and dwarfed within a very limited range of commonplace ideas. *Second*, the novel has absorbed into itself several branches of literature, so that people with ideas, despairing of obtaining an audience for their message by any other means, throw them into the form of a tale. Thus it has come about that this kind of literature has taken its part in popularising certain phases of religious life and thought. Though not a very strong book, *The Gates Ajar* shattered the old unreal notions of heaven in the minds of thousands of half-educated readers. *John Ward Preacher* was a work that dealt a heavy blow at the gloomy dogmas of extreme Calvinism. With finer imagination, and a more genial temper, George Macdonald undermined the religious prejudices of English people as well as those

of his own countrymen, bringing out the large humanity of the Gospel and the fatherly love of God with a force and a persuasiveness the preacher might well envy. *Robert Falconer*, *Alec Forbes*, and *David Elginbrod* were potent contributors to the enlargement of the religious thought of the century among people who had not the patience to read abstract theological essays.

It is obvious that this so-called "religious novel" has its serious disadvantages. It appeals to the imagination rather than to the reason, a right and proper thing to do when its aim is to vivify accepted ideas; but when it enters the region of controversy and seeks to persuade its readers into accepting a certain view, its imaginative pictures unjustly usurp the place of valid arguments. Newman writes *Callista*, a story of the early Christian martyrs, to support the Catholic revival in its high valuation of the Church of the Fathers, and Kingsley follows with his *Hypatia*, in which the gross superstition and brutal cruelty of the Egyptian monks are painted in lurid colours. Neither book moves on lines of theological argument, and yet each enters the arena of current polemics. In *Salem Chapel* and *Phœbe Junior* all who know Nonconformity from the inside see monstrous caricature; yet Mrs. Oliphant's method of presenting the subject allows her to stand out of the arena of con-

troversy where evidence and argument could be coolly weighed. In *Robert Elsmere* Mrs. Humphry Ward represents a non-miraculous creed as the only form of Christianity possible to a person who is not simply hoodwinked by conventional religion. Her hero, entering a great library a believer in the supernatural, comes out disillusioned. We have not a hint about the eye-opening revelations from the mysterious books in that awful chamber that effect so complete a revolution in his ideas. The implied inference is that if only the readers of the novel could obtain access to this wonderful library the scales would fall from their eyes also. This is not argument. As far as it is meant to take the place of reasoning it is guilty of the fallacy called *petitio principii*. And yet it has had its influence on the minds of people who will not take the trouble to think out the problems which they permit themselves to decide on the impulse of imagination.

2. I have not left space to do more than touch on the relation of religion to art during the century. A hasty sketch must suffice. A hundred years ago these two interests stood wide apart as the poles. No people could be more innocent of any attempt to enlist art in the service of religion than the early Evangelicals. It cannot be said that even yet there has been much approach towards mutual interaction

between the two spheres. Nevertheless is it not somewhat significant that two of the greatest, if we may not say the two greatest, artists of the second half of the century, Holman Hunt and Watts, are emphatically religious teachers, the one by means of a realistic presentation of religious ideas, the other with a wholly idealistic treatment of the great themes of the spiritual life. For a masterly exposition of this subject the reader may be referred to Dr. Forsyth's *Religion and Art.*

Coming to regions where the art is much more elementary, and often crude, we have to recognise the immense transformation of the forms and methods of public worship under the influence of a widespread æsthetic feeling which was wholly unknown a hundred years ago. Nothing more grim and gaunt and generally ugly can well be imagined than the conduct of religious services in the churches and chapels of England at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In the Church of England a droning clerk sat below the clergyman who read prayers to lead the responses of the congregation. Of course, there was no intoning; the Psalms were simply muttered, never sung. In the Dissenting chapel, perhaps, three hymns were sung during the course of the service, generally taken from Dr. Watts' *Psalms and Hymns.* These

were given out line by line; subsequently by a daring innovation they were announced verse by verse. There was no organ; happily, that abomination, the grating harmonium, was not yet invented. Sometimes, the singing was supported by one or two violins and perhaps "the big bassoon," such as was heard by the wedding guest in *The Ancient Mariner*. More often the singing was led by a man chosen for his stentorian lungs. In more advanced places of worship a choir pew was arranged round the Communion table, whence the leader conducted the singing with the aid of men's and women's voices. There was no organ at the Weigh House Chapel when Thomas Binney was at the height of his power and popularity. I learn from one of his deacons of those days that when the famous City preacher visited the scene of his former triumphs in the time of his successor, and was shown not only an organ but even a stained-glass window, he expressed amazement that such things should be seen in the Weigh House. Mr. Spurgeon declared that the day an organ entered the Metropolitan Tabernacle he would walk out. But what a change both these great Puritans lived to see!

We associate the development of the æsthetic element in worship with the advance of high Anglicanism, where, indeed, it has been most pro-

nounced. And yet it is neither essential to that phase of religion nor limited to it. It is not essential. There was no attempt at an artistic elaboration of public worship on the part of the founders of the Oxford Movement. Pusey conducted the prayers of the Church with severe simplicity. The æsthetic development of ritualism came later. And yet it is a significant fact that Anglo-Catholicism was not at all popular till it was transformed into ritualism. People cared nothing for the arguments in the *Tracts for the Times*, or noted them only to repudiate them with indignation. But when flowers and candles appeared on ornate altars, priests donned vestments, and choirs began to sing with skill and attractiveness, congregations flocked to the churches. Much of this popular charm of ritualism is no more true in art than it is in religion. A meretricious, scene-painter's art is sufficient for the purpose. Still, good or bad, here is something that appeals to the newly-awakened æsthetic tastes of the English people. Ladies who affect bijou, Japanese, bamboo drawing-rooms at home want some sort of outward grace in the services of the Church. We smile at the frivolity, the superficiality, the unreality of such tendencies when the great and awful facts and duties of religion are concerned. It did not much matter to Elijah whether Horeb was

beautiful or ugly. Still, ugliness is not more religious than grace, and it cannot be questioned that the Evangelicals have lost ground in the Church of England by their self-denying ordinance to eschew all the charms of beauty and music, handing them over to their more worldly-wise rivals.

The change in Nonconformist churches has been much less pronounced. And yet it is by no means slight. With organ and trained choir, the singing of chants and anthems, in some cases the introduction of responses, the worship of the Dissenter has followed the fashion of æstheticism in a mild and moderate measure. Every movement in this direction was viewed at first with aversion by conservative divines. A curious instance of that fact was furnished by the once famous "Rivulet Controversy." Mr. Lynch, a preacher of singular subtlety of thought and spiritual refinement, who drew a select congregation of cultured people from all parts of London to Mornington Chapel in the Hampstead Road, brought out a small volume of poems and hymns which he entitled *The Rivulet*. The contents are of unequal merit. Some of the hymns, such as

Gracious Spirit, dwell with me,

have come to be accepted as among the most precious in any collection for public worship. But the fact that its author introduced this book into

the worship of the church was the occasion of a fierce onslaught from Dr. Campbell, then wielding his sledge-hammer in *The British Banner*. The book was charged with deficiency of Gospel statements. But what most scandalised the critic was its profusion of references to nature. It was represented that there was something profane about this. To sing of woods and fields on Sunday at chapel was a desecration. Fuel was added to the flames when Mr. Lynch, having received a bunch of flowers one Sunday morning, took them with him into the pulpit and based the theme of his discourse upon them. It is to the lasting credit of the memory of Binney, Joshua Harrison, and Edward White, that these good men defended their brother minister from the cruel assaults of the Pope of Dissent.

3. Not less than in the regions of literature and art is the revolution that has taken place in the attitude of religion towards popular recreation. Look at the programme of any active church to-day and compare it with what might have been drawn up a hundred years ago. Then the Sunday and week-evening services would have been about the only items. Now every evening is occupied, largely with directly religious and educational meetings, but also to some considerable extent in the providing of wholesome recreation, especially for young people. Lectures

and concerts, soirées and "at homes" enliven the winter evenings; cricket, tennis, and cycle clubs claim their members for the summer season. Many forms of recreation once shunned by people of religious profession are now patronised by persons whose devoutness cannot be doubted. I am far from saying that this is entirely a matter of congratulation. There is an evident danger in it. The thirst for amusement soon becomes a morbid craving for excitement. At best it is self-centred and superficial. If our most popular services must be "brief and bright," even though we may rejoice in their being also "brotherly," we cannot but recognise the religious shallowness they will encourage. But there is another side to this subject. The most active work of a church in the matter of amusement is its attempt to bring some light and joy into the lives of the poor and miserable. We are beginning to see that it is not enough to offer our unfortunate brother sound doctrine. We must uplift and enlarge and cheer his life on all sides. Jesus threatened the Pharisee with wrath and terror; for the Prodigal Son who came home in rags and misery He had music and dancing. The religious progress of the century has brought us to a larger, more human, more sympathetic appreciation of the Gospel of the Son of Man than was dreamed of a hundred years ago.

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